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New Testament  
Criticism



H. E. DANA

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# NEW TESTAMENT CRITICISM

HISTORY — SOURCES — RESULTS

H. E. DANA



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# NEW TESTAMENT CRITICISM

A BRIEF SURVEY OF THE NATURE AND NECESSITY,  
HISTORY, SOURCES AND RESULTS OF NEW  
TESTAMENT CRITICISM

BY

H. E. DANA, *Harvey Eugene 1888-1945*

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*In Loving Memory*

TO MY FATHER

CHARLES MARTIN DANA

AND MY AUNT

HENRIETTA BENEDICT DANA

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## PREFACE.

The assumption that the way to deal with the problems of Biblical criticism is to ignore them has been inimical to the best interests of Christianity. From it have come two detrimental results. For one thing, it has permitted destructive efforts in criticism to take the lead, so that evangelical scholarship has been kept perpetually on the defensive. Secondly, it has deprived Christianity of the most accurate knowledge of its Scriptures, for only processes of sane criticism can bring the best results. The attitude of the present work is to frankly face these problems, as they pertain to the NT,\* review the facts in the case, and indicate the directions in which those facts seem, to a conservative, evangelical Christian student, to point. We have tried to keep honesty rather than orthodoxy as our criterion, though we have not as yet found the facts compelling us far away from the traditional view. May the book perform a worthwhile ministry!

H. E. DANA.

Fort Worth, Texas, July, 1924.

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\*Used throughout the book as an abbreviation for New Testament.

## ERRATA

Page 65, line 15, delete "*who was, before Darwin, the apostle of evolution.*"

Page 65, line 21, for "*These two*" substitute "*Hume.*"

Page 67, line 3, read "*Spencer 1820-1903.*"



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## CHAPTER I.

### THE NATURE AND NECESSITY OF NEW TESTAMENT CRITICISM.

It is true of New Testament Criticism, as of every other process of human endeavor, that one must know what it is before realizing why it should be. The passive indifference, and even active aversion, manifested toward a critical study of the Bible has resulted from a failure to comprehend its true elements and objectives. It is therefore requisite that we should begin our study with an inquiry into the nature and necessity of New Testament criticism.

#### I. DEFINITION.

There are probably few terms which have been more misunderstood than Biblical criticism. The popular conception is that any sort of criticism of the Bible is reprehensible and hostile to religious faith. This erroneous idea has arisen from two causes. The first is a lack of appreciation for the results to be obtained by criticism. The critic proceeds with a view to discovering all the facts of history and experience which lie behind the literature composing our Bible, using these as a means of securing a really accurate interpretation. The popular mind is satisfied with a doctrinal and devotional interpretation, such as may appeal to its fancy, and hence sees no value to be derived from the processes of criticism. The other reason for this mistaken attitude toward Biblical criticism is the gross abuse to which it has been subjected by those who have approached the task with a preconceived prejudice against tradi-



tional Christianity and its theological content. Such destructive criticism has created a just resentment in the hearts of those who love the Bible and its teachings. The first cause is a misapprehension of the best results to be obtained from Bible study; the second is a misapplication of a really correct method.

X New Testament Criticism may be defined as *the process of determining the origin, sources, preservation and reliability of the twenty-seven books which compose our New Testament*. It is "that mental process in modern Christianity, whereby the historic character, the true nature, of divine revelation is appreciated and manifested. . . . So we define criticism as a movement of the human mind, inspired by the consciousness of truth unknown, but knowable, and sustained by the resolution to serve the truth without fear or favor. . . . Criticism is not, primarily, any given set of opinions regarding the Bible. Not a few 'critical' opinions are less 'critical' than some 'traditional' opinions, inasmuch as they are equally haughty and overbearing and, at the same time, are farther from the real facts in the case. Criticism is not this or that opinion; neither is it this or that body of opinions. It is an intellectual temperament, a mental disposition. . . . The ideal is the free study of all facts, howsoever named and catalogued" (Nash: *History of the Higher Criticism*, pp. 14, 81, 84f). Criticism discovers for us the true and rational grounds for our faith, thereby transforming faith from the realm of religious assumption to that of scientific certainty. Such a result is certainly to be greatly desired.

## II. TWO PHASES OF NEW TESTAMENT CRITICISM.

1. Historical. This is concerned with the origin and

authenticity of the various books. It seeks to discover the circumstances which occasioned them, the identity and character of the writers, and the processes by which each book found a place in the NT canon. This phase is also called "Higher Criticism," but about this term there has gathered so much opprobrium in the popular Christian mind that it is doubtless the part of wisdom to abandon it in favor of the less offensive and really more expressive term adopted here.

2. Textual. This phase is concerned with securing the original words of the author. It discovers, compares and classifies the various manuscripts of the New Testament, works out the principles for judging the value of these manuscripts, and from them constructs the text of the NT which as nearly as possible duplicates the original autographs.

3. Literary Critical study of style, language, structure.

### III. THE ISSUES INVOLVED IN NEW TESTAMENT

#### CRITICISM

1. The Historical Reliability of the Literary Sources of Christianity. The NT scriptures compose the foundation upon which the Christian religion is built. If this literature is not historically dependable, then Christianity is nothing more than a religious superstition, expressed in a group of worthless dogmas. Rational intelligence revolts from committing itself to such a system. As thinking, intelligent, honest men and women, we have an undeniable moral right to determine for ourselves whether such be the case. Intellectual honesty and the trusteeship of life demand of us that we should not proceed upon uncertainties in so vital a matter. A mere sentimental loyalty to a religion in which our fathers believed is not sufficient justification for the investment of a life. If we are to stake our all for the de-

fense and propagation of the Christian religion, it is not only a privilege, but an imperative obligation that we should assure ourselves of its substantial reality and value. Such a result is sought in NT criticism.

2. The Basal Motives Underlying the Literature of Christianity. The ideals generated in the consciousness of historical Christianity are such that the value of a product is inseparably linked with its motive. For this reason we are unable to escape from a demand instinctive in the Christian religion, that a book be all that it purports to be if it is to receive our reverence and submission. If any NT writing is vitiated by ordinary human selfishness and deceit, it is automatically eliminated from the category of divinely inspired literature. The exalted Christian conception of God does not permit that anything smacking of the least dishonesty be associated with Him. If a second century writer, moved by an enthusiastic impulse to meet the insidious arguments of Gnosticism, wrote the epistle which we call "Ephesians," and forged Paul's name to it to give it the strongest possible appeal to the readers of his day, then the Christian faith of the centuries has suffered a serious blow. Thus we may see the question of motives involves the reality of divine supervision in the production and formation of the NT, and its consequent authority. To reject it as a chosen means of revelation from God is to deprive it of all authority in religion and conduct. Is our confidence in the special divine inspiration of these twenty-seven books well founded? The answer is to be had in NT criticism.

3. The Claim of Christianity Upon the Best Intelligence. ((It is characteristic of the trained mind to demand objective proof.)) The untutored may be content

with that which makes him "feel good," but the cultured intellect is disposed to ridicule a cause which has no stronger claim than that. Christianity cannot hold an educated constituency unless it has real historical evidence for what it believes. (( NT criticism, when properly conducted, enters the archives of the past and brings forward the objective proof which is needed to satisfy a cultivated intellect.))

#### IV. SOME IMPORTANT DISTINCTIONS

There is no realm in which one needs more to be carefully discriminating than when he approaches the field of Biblical criticism. The consideration which should be ever kept clearly in mind is that we are seeking *facts* and not *opinions*. We have seen that the nature of criticism requires that its objective be truth, and only truth. Theories are frequently necessary as vehicles by means of which we may move in the direction of truth, but in criticism theories should always be servants, and never masters. The fundamental aim of the critic is to secure historical reality. The greatest obstruction which is met in the pursuit of this object is what is known as the personal equation. This element prevents any absolute attainment of the ideal. One's native disposition and habits of mind, early training and Christian experience, environment and purpose in life, all enter in to color in some degree his conclusion. It is thus eminently necessary that each student shall think for himself, and proceed with great caution as he advances through the vast literature of NT criticism. Careful discrimination should be made at three important points.

1. Between Facts and the Interpretation of Facts. The failure to recognize this distinction has deceived a

multitude of honest seekers after truth. The critic does not stop with merely the discovery of a group of facts; it is his legitimate and necessary function to seek an explanation of those facts. The facts one must accept without hesitation; but the explanation, which is essentially a matter of inference, is amenable to challenge. The principle which should govern the process of interpretation is to find that hypothesis which will most satisfactorily explain all the related facts, and abandon it only when other facts are discovered which prove it to be untenable. Just here is the crux of the whole task of criticism.

*Facts*

*Doctrine*

2. Between the Essentially Historical and the Essentially Theological. When a matter belongs distinctly to the realm of history, it should never be determined on the basis of theological considerations. The deciding criterion in these essentially historical questions is the evidence at hand. It is true that often certain fundamental theological conceptions are involved in historical problems, but in such cases doctrine should be waived until history is decided. This principle is in keeping with the true function of theology, which is the explanation and correlation of the facts of religion. Hence the theologian must wait until the historian has rendered his verdict. The truth of this principle is self-evident. But let it be remembered that this does not eliminate the right and necessity that the theologian treat the material which history presents. To say that theology has no place in the realm of science is to discard the most sacred privilege of the soul—the contemplation of the realities of religion. It is in this result that criticism finds its reward and justification.

*or  
Doctrinal  
Content*



3. Between the Essential Content of Thought and the Incidental Form of Thought. Truth consists of certain basal realities. These realities are the same, regardless of the forms in which they present themselves to the mind. The fact that the shining of the sun means to the child a chance to play, and to the farmer an opportunity to cultivate his growing crops, alters in no way the sunshine, nor does it prove that either the child or the farmer has an incorrect conception of the phenomenon. It only reveals the divergent avenues through which the fact approaches consciousness. Each defines the fact in modes of thinking which are harmonious with the sphere of life in which he moves. This is true of all thinking. The modes of thought which we find in the NT are those current in the world in which the authors lived. Criticism discerns the historical fact of the mode, theology penetrates to the essential reality which underlies it. But all too often the zealous dogmatist has denied the historical fact of the form of thought, in the fear that his theology might be thereby impaired. This error should be studiously avoided.

McClaymont: "The broken view toward"



PART I.  
HISTORY



CHAPTER II

RABBINIC CRITICISM OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

*Canon = cane, reed,  
measuring rod;  
that by which  
measurement of  
religious truth  
is made*

The limits of the Old Testament canon were not fixed by an act of special divine revelation. There was a process of selection, mediated by the Holy Spirit through human agency. Each book passed before a court of Spirit-guided intelligence before it could ever take its place as Holy Scripture. By some such method it appears now to many conservative scholars that the Old Testament came into existence as a canon of scripture, though we cannot claim that they are unanimous on the matter. There is not final agreement among Old Testament scholars as to "The Determining Principle in the Formation of the Canon." The situation has been briefly and thoroughly stated by Prof. Geo. L. Robinson, from whom we take the liberty of quoting a few paragraphs.

(“Who had the right to declare a writing canonical?”) To this question widely divergent answers have been given. According to a certain class of theologians the several books of the Old Testament were composed by authors who were conscious not only of their inspiration but also that their writings were destined to be handed down to the church of future generations as sacred. In other words, each writer canonized, as it were, his own writings. For example, Dr. W. H. Green (*Canon*, 35f, 106, 110) says, ‘No formal declaration of their canonicity was needed to give them sanction. They were from the first not only eagerly read by the devout but believed to be Divinely obligatory. . . . Each individual book of an acknowledged prophet of Jehovah, or of anyone

credited as inspired by Him to make known His will, was accepted as the work of God immediately upon its appearance. . . . Those books and those only were accepted as the Divine standards of their faith and regulative of their conduct which were written for this definite purpose by those whom they believed to be inspired of God. It was this which made them canonical. The spiritual profit found in them corresponded with and confirmed the belief in their heavenly origin. And the public official action which further attested, though it did not initiate, their canonicity, followed in the wake of the popular recognition of their Divine authority. . . . The writings of the prophets, delivered to the people as a declaration of the Divine will, possessed canonical authority from the moment of their appearance. . . . The canon does not derive its authority from the church, whether Jewish or Christian; the office of the church is merely that of a custodian and a witness.' So likewise Dr. J. D. Davis (*Pres. and Ref. Review*, April, 1902, 182.)

"On the contrary, Dillmann (*Jahrb. fuer Deutsche Theol.*, 111, 420) more scientifically claims that 'history knows nothing of the individual books having been designed to be sacred from their origin. . . . These books bore indeed in themselves from the first those characteristics on account of which they were subsequently admitted into the sacred collection, but yet always had first to pass through a shorter or longer period of verification, and make trial of the Divine power resident within them upon the hearts of the church before they were outwardly and formally acknowledged by it as Divine books.' As a matter of fact, the books of the Old Testament are still on trial, and ever will be. So far

Davidson's a mediate position -  
 writer was conscious of value of  
 writing & purpose under God; books  
 had intrinsic value which in

as is known, the great majority of the writers of Holy Scriptures did not arbitrarily hand over their productions to the church and expect them to be regarded as canon Scripture. Two parties are involved in the making of canonical Scripture—the original author and the church—both of whom were inspired by the same Spirit. The author wrote inspired by the Divine Spirit, and the church ever since—Jewish and Christian alike—has been inspired to recognize the authoritative character of their writings. And so it will be to the end of time. ‘We cannot be certain that anything comes from God unless it bring us personally something evidently Divine’ (Briggs, *The Study of Holy Scripture*, 162)” (*Int. St. Bib. Ency.*, 554f)

The position advocated by Dr. Robinson, which is intermediate between the liberal and ultra-conservative extremes, has merit both in that it commends itself to reason and harmonizes with what few facts we have relative to the origin of the Old Testament. Much of the process lies in obscurity, but it is probable that by some method the five books of Moses became accepted as divinely authoritative very early in Israel’s history, and were designated “The Law.” To the Law was later added a group of books called “The Prophets,” and still later “The Sacred Writings,” or *Hagiographa*. It was in the formation of these last two groups that rabbinic or scribal criticism had its part.

Beginning with Ezra there grew up in Israel a school of professional students of the Law, who gave their entire time and thought to searching out and determining matters of divine revelation. They were called scribes, or rabbis. A large part of our present Old Testament canon developed under their scrutiny and direction.

Pentateuch  
 Prophets (included History)  
 Hagiographa } Three parts  
 of  
 canonical  
 OT

Though their methods were far different from the scientific processes of modern times, yet they were really students, and were seeking intelligent and trustworthy results. The characteristic defects of their work were in their methods and not their motives. It was the fact of their existence and labors which assures us that our Old Testament canon did not result from any haphazard or irrational impulses, but came from an effort at candid, earnest, and intelligent investigation of the merits of the different books. This process was in its essential nature Biblical criticism, and forms a continuous whole with the processes by which our NT came into existence, and hence must be presented in a complete historical view.

The work of the scribes presents three elements which had much to do with its character and results.

1. It was dominated by their *belief in the absolute supremacy of the law*. When the Jews returned from their long period of captivity in Babylon, they had learned a new reverence for the Law. Its violation was the original cause which had brought upon the nation the catastrophe of deportation from their beloved land of promise, and they returned with a deep resolution that it should hold a high place of regard in all their future history. Ezra, the founder of the school of the scribes, was the first to give the Law its pre-eminent place. From his time on all the religious life and thought of the Jews were subject to the Law and its interpretation. Nothing was countenanced which did not meet the demands of this final test.

This policy, though finally carried to unwise and hurtful extremes, was not essentially wrong. If reli-



gious development and investigation are to lead man to fuller and more accurate knowledge of God, there must be a guide of recognized authority which will direct the processes along correct lines. Otherwise, the results in the realm of religion would ever be wholly unreliable. Such a guide the Jews found in the five Books of Moses, which they made the nucleus of revelation, and the criterion of religious activity. Their mistake was in enslaving themselves to the letter of the Law, rather than seeking to discern and apply its spirit and principle.

But however far astray their efforts might have gone they present processes which belong to the history of Biblical criticism. Of course their methods were far from "critical" in the sense connoted by the present technical use of that term, but in the light of the larger significance of criticism the term may be applied to the scribal use of the Law. It was the canon of judgment by which they tested every religious practice, idea, or writing which was presented to them, and thus a means, or criterion of criticism. The process involved an exercise of the judgment, in interpreting and applying the Law, and imposing its tests, consequently was an act of criticism in the broader sense of the term.

2. The results of scribal activity found their main expression in *rabbinic tradition*. The scribes of the Jews did practically no writing. Their opinions were transmitted by word of mouth and memorized by their disciples. Thus generation after generation handed down a fund of oral tradition which was regarded as sacred by those who received it. This oral tradition was known as the "Hedge about the Law." No opinion

could be accepted which was not in full harmony with this tradition. Matters germane to the Law might be added by scribes, but they must be in agreement with the tradition already in existence. This of course placed severe and detrimental limitations upon the efforts of the scribes. It foreclosed any possibility of real scholarship, for it confined attention to a very narrow field. Only in rare cases did an unusually aggressive mind, such as Hillel, force itself beyond these prescribed bounds and enter new fields of religious thought, and when this was done it raised a storm of vicious controversy. A case in point was the lifelong and intense rivalry between Hillel and Shammai. This custom served as a barrier, rather than an aid, to real Biblical criticism, though it was in a sense a process of criticism, for it involved a method of testing.

✓ 3. The work of the scribes was always influenced by the demands of *the religious consciousness of Judaism*. No race of people have ever been more intensely religious than the Jews. Their contribution to the religious life of humanity has been the greatest ever made. From any point of view from which we may consider the matter, Christianity is the world's greatest and purest religion, and historically it was an outgrowth of Judaism. We must remember that Pharisaism does not represent the best that was in Judaism. It was a product of Judaism carried to unreasonable extremes. The multitudes who crowded about Jesus in Judea and Galilee, and hung upon every word of his teaching, were the true representatives of the typical Judaism of the first century. Religion holds a large place in the life and

thought of this great people. By this intense religious consciousness the results of scribal effort must be tested. In the selection and compilation of the Old Testament, they had to give consideration to the demands of this religious consciousness. Hence the Old Testament canon was not the product of arbitrary choice on the part of a small group holding ecclesiastical authority, but the result of a process of religious experience. The hand of God guided this development.



### CHAPTER III.

#### PATRISTIC CRITICISM OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Along a line of development somewhat similar to that which marked the Old Testament, the New Testament books pursued their way to canonical standing, a status reached by the majority of them before the dawn of the third century, and by the entire 27 by the dawn of the fourth. Nothing could be farther from the truth than the idea that every book for which a place was sought in the New Testament canon was received. On the contrary, the number rejected was considerably larger than the number finally approved. "Nor was it without a struggle that many of them made their way into the charmed circle of the Christian canon" (Conybeare, *Hist. of NT Crit.*, p. 18). ("Before the sacred volume came into existence, the various writings of which it is composed had for many years to submit to the judgment of the Christian communities in which they circulated, before they could be admitted to a position of respect and honour in the church at large. If they bore the name of an Apostle, their authorship had to depend for a favourable reception on the intrinsic value and importance of their contents. All of them had thus to go through a period of probation; . . . and it was only because they commended themselves to general approval that the writings which we find in the New Testament gradually obtained a position of authority similar to that which the Old Testament held among the Jews" (McClymont, *NT Crit.*, p. 48). "Out of the many miscellaneous writings which had come

from the earlier days a certain number were found, after a sifting that went on for some generations, to have selected themselves. They had proved, in Christian experience, to have an inner vitality, while others, which pretended to just as high a title, did not make the same appeal" (see E. F. Scott, *NT of Today*, pp. 24-26). The opinion of these great scholars, of widely divergent schools of critical thought, is the reflection of a constantly growing conviction among all scholars that the NT books attained their canonical standing after a period of rigid testing. Though the methods were uncritical as compared with modern standards, the process belongs to a complete historical view. "For the discussions in the second and early third centuries of the age and attribution of several of these books constitute a first chapter in the history of New Testament criticism" (Conybeare, *Hist.*, p. 2).

#### I. EARLIEST EFFORTS.

The naive credulity of primitive Christianity in accepting religious writings as scripturè, without discrimination or investigation, exists only in the imagination of some modern critics. When the actual facts are known relative to the NT books, we see that, in the first place, (after their composition a "hundred years elapsed before they were assembled in one collection and began to take their place alongside of the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible as authoritative scriptures" (Conybeare, *Hist.*, p. 1). Furthermore, the unvarnished fact is that some of them struggled for two hundred years more to attain canonical standing (as, for instance, Hebrews, II Peter and Revelation). And even some books received from the first by the majority found severe opposition from some quarters. Before the end

Does not  
mean  
no collection

of the second century the Alogi were ascribing the Fourth Gospel to Cerinthus; in fact, Eusebius reports that by this date all the Johannine literature had been questioned. (In the last half of the second century Claudius Apollinaris, bishop of Hierapolis, raised a question about the harmony of chronology in the four Gospels, especially as between the Synoptics and John.) A little later Gaius, a presbyter of the Roman church, assailed both the Fourth Gospel and Revelation. Opposition to the apostolic authorship of Revelation persisted in the East well into the fourth century. Perhaps the most deft piece of historical criticism to be found in ancient Christian literature is presented in the attack on the apostolic authorship of Revelation by Dionysius of Alexandria, about A. D. 260. It reads like the work of a modern critic when we hear him say, "In any case, I cannot allow that the author of the Apocalypse is that Apostle, the son of Zebedee and brother of James, to whom belong the Gospel entitled 'According to John' and the general Epistle. For I clearly infer, no less from the character and literary style of the two authors than from the tenor of the book, that they are not one and the same" (cit., Conybeare, *Hist.*, p. 4). Dionysius then launches forth into a very convincing argument, organizing his protest against the apostolic authorship of Revelation around six points. He assumes without question the apostolic authorship of the Gospel and Epistles, and shows that the Apocalypse differs from them (1) in style; (2) general content; (3) treatment of the author's identity; (4) approach to and treatment of theme; (5) basal ideas; and (6) terminology. An example of the artless simplicity of ancient Christendom in selecting their sacred canon! And even the Old Testament was not free from critical scrutiny. It was early

Shows  
Collection  
of Gospel

in the second century that the Gnostics raised their objections to the authority of the Old Testament and the Jewish idea of God. In the first half of the third century Julius Africanus (died about 240) addressed a letter to Origen, in which he assailed the character and canonical standing of the *Story of Susanna*. If we had all the literature of those early centuries we should very probably find many other instances of adverse criticism against both the Old Testament and the New. In the writings of Clement of Alexandria we find some most caustic criticism of Apocryphal NT writings. There is sufficient evidence to justify us in regarding it as historically true that there was much that may properly be called criticism in the earliest stages of Christian history.

## II. PRE-EMINENT NAMES.

1. Irenæus. Prior to the time of Irenæus there had been no studied, organized defence of established tradition relative to the apostolic writings, but when we reach the writings of this great apologist we come to elaborate discussions of the origin and authenticity of NT books. To him belongs the credit of ushering in the defense of the Christian scriptures. His methods were crude and untrustworthy, but he unmistakably made the best effort he could in the direction of real criticism. He provides some evidences which are rather disconcerting to critics of modern times, and which have won for him their hearty disrespect. But when he is considered from every point of view, in spite of his unscientific methods, he did a marvelous piece of work in the realm of NT criticism.

2. Origen. In the extent of his effort, Origen was the greatest Biblical critic of all time. Thousands of



volumes are ascribed to him by tradition, which, though not to be taken literally, at least means that he made a tremendous impression upon his generation with the vast proportions of his literary accomplishment. He was dominated largely by doctrinal bias, and was very credulous in his attitude toward the claims of early Christian documents. He gave largest attention to textual criticism, though he has left us some historical material of real value. His greatest critical work was his *Hexapla*, later supplemented by the *Tetrapla*, both being works of comparison on the extant texts of the Old Testament.

3. *Eusebius*. This ancient scholar and author has provided for us the most important and helpful source of information which we have from early Christianity. He wrote a *Church History*, in which there is extensive discussion of NT books and critical problems, indicating not only the opinions at and prior to his day, but presenting many of the reasons for such opinions. He divided the NT books into "acknowledged" and "disputed," presenting in addition some apocryphal works in a class denoted as "spurious." He was of a much more liberal tendency than the typical Christian leader of the early centuries—being semi-Arian in theology—and adopted methods which may not improperly be called critical.

4. *Jerome*. When considered from all points of view, Jerome was the greatest critic of the patristic age. He devoted attention to both textual and historical questions, but always succeeded in bringing his conclusions within the bounds of Catholic tradition. Though a Latin theologian, he used both the Hebrew and Greek. His ecclesiastical bias vitiates many of the results of his

work, but his really great efforts along the line of Bible study merit for him most honorable mention in a history of Biblical criticism. His greatest contribution was his Latin translation of the Bible, known as the Vulgate, which is the standard text of Roman Catholicism down to the present time.

### III. INFLUENTIAL CENTERS.

The significance of localities in the intellectual history of mankind has ever been considerable. Leading thinkers gravitate to certain centers, which become prominent for some phase or tendency of thought and learning, and as a result the very name of the place takes on a distinctive atmosphere derived from the thought life revolving about it. For this reason place names are attached as descriptive titles to certain types of intellectual activity, as *German* rationalism, *French* agnosticism, *English* conservatism, etc. This principle operated in the development of early Christian thought. Certain localities became conspicuous for their distinctive types of learning. These centers therefore have a place in the history of criticism.

1. Alexandria. The first considerable effort at systematic Bible study which appears in Christian history was made in the catechetical school at Alexandria. Of its origin very little is known. In fact, the introduction of Christianity into Egypt is wrapt in obscurity. The tradition that Mark the Evangelist was the apostle of Egyptian Christianity is exceedingly doubtful. The earliest leader there, known to history, was Pantænus, who is by some regarded as the founder of the catechetical school. It is probable, however, that others preceded him in the school, as the evidences seem to indicate that the school dated back to the very begin-

*Radiation of allegorical  
method of interpretation.*

ning of Alexandrian Christianity. It seems that from its very incipency the school was much influenced by the Hellenic-Jewish philosophy of Philo and his followers. It was this influence that produced in it the allegorical method of interpretation, which was the reading into scripture of assumed philosophical conceptions, a practice that almost rendered void of critical value the entire work of the school. It was in the realm of theology rather than criticism that the Alexandrian school made its contribution to Christian history. It is true, however, that in the writings of Clement and Origen we have furnished us some data which are of great value for historical purposes, even though their own efforts were not up to the standards of criticism. The Alexandrian school continued until the opening of the fifth century, when the Arian controversy and the reaction against the teachings of Origen caused its disintegration. But the influence of the school did not die with it, for its impress has been manifest in all subsequent Christian history.

*is:*  
*not*  
*ual*  
*of*  
*d not*  
*the*  
*balance*

2. Cæsarea. Relatively little is known of the school at Cæsarea (if, indeed, we may call it a school), but there is abundant evidence that it was a center of great influence in the development of early Christian thought. It was founded by Origen, after he was driven from Alexandria through the jealousy of his bishop. It was the site of a great theological library, which exerted wide influence until its destruction in the seventh century. This library holds the distinction of being the best produced by ancient Christianity. It combined with the influence of Origen to make Cæsarea the center of much of the learning of early Christian history. It was the home of Pamphilus, a scholarly priest of wide re-

noun, and his famous disciple Eusebius, the church historian. Much time was spent there in study and literary labors by such scholars as Basil and Jerome.

3. Antioch. <sup>in Syria</sup> Around this name gathered a very distinctive type of early Christian thought. Its influence was potent and extensive, but not long-lived. The city of Antioch was the metropolis of the eastern Roman Empire, and the third city in rank of the entire realm. The contact of Paul with the early church there gave it a prestige which it did not lose for many centuries. It received further prominence through the renown of the great Christian martyr Ignatius. The earliest evidence of the school at that place dates at about A. D. 269. It appears fully in the light of history with the name of Lucian, a famous presbyter who suffered martyrdom about A. D. 312. He received his impulse for Bible study from the school of Cæsarea, and thus was historically linked up with the school of Alexandria. Much of the work ascribed to Lucian is of a really critical character, and exhibits considerable liberty from the dogmatic restraints of the static orthodoxy of his day. The next name of conspicuous significance in the progress of the school of Antioch was Diodorus, bishop of Tarsus (378-394). He was a scholar of marked ability and considerable historical sense. But the pre-eminent representative was Theodore of Mopsuestia (died 429). His views and methods were surprisingly liberal, and brought upon him the condemnation of the Church as a heretic. His work stands out in bold relief when compared with the other efforts of his day in the direction of Bible study. With his name is usually associated John Chrysostom, the great preacher and churchman. Chrysostom showed much of the influence of the

Antiochian school in his theology and exegesis, but was naturally more influenced by ecclesiastical bias than his great contemporary. Theodoret (died 457) is usually given as the last representative of the school. He was a Bible student of rare judgment and ability, but was much influenced by church tradition. The history of the school practically came to an end in the Nestorian controversy, about the middle of the fifth century. On the whole, its work had been more in line with modern methods and ideas than those of any other critical school of the early Christian centuries. It was characterized by sober intellectuality, and an approach to a really scientific attitude toward Biblical study. It might have made a valuable contribution to subsequent Christian thought and learning, had not its influence been stifled by the dogmatism of ecclesiastical tyranny.

*Nestorianism  
 m. J. X. to  
 divine  
 person/Logos  
 of a human  
 person.  
 joined in  
 perfect  
 harmony  
 of action  
 but not  
 the unity  
 of a single  
 individual*

4. Edessa. This was one of the chief cities of the Mesopotamian region. The origin of Christianity there is unknown, though an untrustworthy tradition ascribes it to Thaddæus. It is quite likely that it was evangelized from Palestine. The history of Christianity in Edessa certainly dates back several decades into the second century. It was for some time the influential center of orthodox Christianity in Syria and Persia, but lapsed into Arianism, and finally into Nestorianism. It was the home of the great church Father Ephrem, and was the seat of the preservation of the Syriac version of the Bible and Tatian's Diatessaron. Beyond this the school is of inconsiderable significance in the history of NT study.

#### IV. RESULTS.

The sublime outcome of all this early critical effort is the twenty-seven books of our NT canon. A vast

array of historical data comes along with this treasure, but the New Testament is the jewel which sheds radiance upon the whole history. From the vast literary accretions of early Christianity arose this princely product, disengaged from its inferior surroundings by the crude but faithful efforts of Patristic criticism. It has already been noted that the books rejected from the NT canon far outnumbered those received. The quality of Patristic criticism can be better appreciated by a review of the literature of which it divested the NT. Of the documents rejected there were four classes, belonging to the four types of literature found in our NT; viz., gospels, acts, epistles, and apocalypses. A few chief representatives of each class may be considered here.

### 1. The Apocryphal Gospels.

We are unable to even approximate the number of accounts and interpretations of our Lord's ministry which were produced in the century following his lifetime. Luke informs us that there were many. A considerable number are still known to us, a few of which are extant. We consider here the most important ones.

(1) *The Gospel of the Hebrews.* This is a work which was probably produced in Aramaic somewhere about 125 A. D. It seems to have been a compilation of extracts from the four canonical gospels, prepared for Judaistic Christians of Palestine and Syria. There are still in existence a few fragments. Its chief basis is the gospel of Matthew, which was the most popular of the four gospels among the Jews. Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Eusebius and Jerome, all make reference to this gospel, and it is chiefly from them that we derive our knowledge of it.



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of the law  
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precepts  
the gospel  
observed  
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& Gent  
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sp. of  
restoration

(2) *The Gospel of the Ebionites.* This, like the Gospel of the Hebrews, is a second century composition made up of extracts from the canonical gospels, but using chiefly Matthew and Luke. It should probably be dated later than 150 A. D., as it was used by the Gnostic Ebionites of the late second century. Occasional mention is made in early Christian literature of a "Gospel of the Twelve Apostles," which is thought to have been identical with this gospel. Only a few fragments have survived.

asana

(3) *The Gospel of the Egyptians.* This interesting document, of which it is probable that several fragments have been discovered among the papyri, was drafted in support of the Enkratite heresy of Egypt, having probably been used by the Naasenes and Sabellians also. It was a list of the sayings of Jesus, representing Him as placing His sanction upon, or even enjoining, a life of rigid asceticism. It was written in Greek, near the close of the second century (c. 175). The most extensive reference to it is to be found in the writings of Clement of Alexandria, who severely denounces its teachings and condemns its use.

Enkratite = self-disciplin  
in power  
abjured  
marriage  
the use of  
wine &  
meat  
Sabellian  
But one  
person in  
the Godh  
Son & HS  
are but  
different  
powers,  
operations or  
offices of the one  
God the  
Father

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anton, or if

(4) *The Gospel of Peter.* Nine leaves of this gospel are still in existence, sufficient to reveal quite clearly its character and contents. It was composed to support the docetic theories of Gnosticism with reference to the person and work of Jesus. The contents are based upon the four gospels, being a sketch of the Passion, Resurrection and Appearances, so revised and interpolated as to make these events harmonize with Gnostic views. The date may be placed at 140-150 A. D.

al, of  
estial origin; incarnation,  
unification, resurrection  
and appearances or  
elusions. Messial-Spirit came upon  
him for ministry.

(5) *The Gospel of Thomas.* We have in this gospel

pel a very naive and almost ludicrous effort to reconstruct the history of the infancy and childhood of Jesus up to twelve years of age. The conceptions presented by the book, of Jesus' conduct in this obscure period of his life, are crude almost to the degree of becoming blasphemous. It has survived in complete form, but very little is known of its origin. It was probably written in Greek in the latter part of the second century, and intended for Gnostic readers. Irenæus is our chief source of information as to its origin.

*lost + Gospel* (6) *The Protevangelium of James.* The gospel which has been thus designated is another of the "gospels of the infancy." It is a romantic fiction concerning Mary, dealing with her life from birth to the slaughter of the innocents. Considerable material is derived from Matthew and Luke. It seems to have been very popular in Medieval Christianity, as we possess more MSS of it than of any other apocryphal gospel. There may be some slight historical basis for the history it purports to record, though in the main it is fictitious. It was one of the earliest of the apocryphal gospels, originating about 125 A. D. (*Others, 200 A.D.*)

## 2. *The Apocryphal Acts.*

These are all patterned after our canonical book of that title. They are made up of traditions which grew up around the names of the great apostles and possess some historical value. The detailed events as recorded are not to be depended upon though as historical verities. Much unreliable tradition, and even some pure fiction, is interwoven with the history, so that it is difficult to know just what we may accept. But it is possible for the competent critic to cull out that which is of real historical value.



(1) Acts of John. This is quite likely the oldest of the apocryphal acts. Its date is regarded by most patristic scholars as belonging to the first half of the second century, or about 125-150 A. D. Therefore its historical importance is superior to that of any of the other documents in this class. There must have been some basis of fact in the tradition which it records, since it came so shortly after the Apostolic Age. It has come down to us in a fragmentary form. The beginning of the book is lost, but it is thought by some that it opened with an account of John's banishment on Patmos. Where the document, as now extant, takes up the Apostle he is approaching Ephesus. From this point forward Ephesus is the center of the scenes of his life, the rest of which is spent in journeys about Asia Minor. Several miracles are ascribed to him, which contain certainly a large element of exaggeration, as it was not possible for a second century mind to deal with miracles without yielding to the impulse to surround them with as much wonder as possible. According to this record John died in peace at Ephesus.

(2) Acts of Paul. This was quite a lengthy document of which only a few fragments remain, the longest of which is a section which came to have separate existence under the caption "Acts of Paul and Thecla." It is a later writing than the Acts of John, having been produced in the last half of the second century. Most of the events described are likely fictitious, with perhaps slight historical basis. Tertullian tells us that the place of composition was Asia (meaning Asia Minor), and that the author, a presbyter, confessed to having written it.

(3) *Acts of Peter*. Of this document a few fragments are still in existence, one of considerable length. There are several references to it in ecclesiastical writers. It is occupied mainly with giving an account of Peter's contest with Simon Magus at Rome. Of this portion, the fictitious nature cannot be doubted. It is of historical interest as bearing witness to the traditions of Paul's visit to Spain and Peter's martyrdom at Rome. It is not impossible that some real contact of Peter with Simon Magus at Rome might have furnished grounds for the main body of the story. The date we accept here is 160. There are evidences of Gnostic influence. (Goodspeed places the date at 200-220.)

(4) *Acts of Pilate*. The earliest reference to this work is in Justin's Apology (chaps. 35-39). The next reference after Justin Martyr is that of Tertullian. Harnack thinks that it consisted of reports of Pilate to the Roman government. The contents, as we have them now, tell how Tiberius reports to the Senate matters that have come to him with regard to the Christians, the Senate refers the matter back to him, and he decides to deal tolerantly with the new sect. Tiberius declares that these things have been reported to him by Pilate. Whether this document is the one referred to by Justin or not, we can not tell. Its historical validity is very doubtful. Mention is made of such a writing by Eusebius. It is thought by the majority of scholars that the Acts of Pilate now extant was composed about 350-400, on the basis of the suggestion found in the references of early Christian writers to such a work, and that the original document, known to Justin, Tertullian, and Eusebius, is now lost. This is likely the true explanation.

### 3. The Apocryphal Epistles.

Of all the apocryphal literature this group represents far the greatest value. The historical material, though meager, is incidental, and consequently quite reliable. The reflection of early Christian thought, and the development of doctrine, are of greatest importance. They likewise reveal the devotional life of Christianity in the period in which they were written. Some are conscious forgeries, so far as authenticity is concerned, but several were written by their authors without any intention of concealing their origin. The more important among the spurious ones are Paul's epistle to the Laodiceans, III Corinthians, and the correspondence of Paul and Seneca. There is likewise a short homily, attributed to Clement of Rome, and listed as II Clement. The two longest and most important, and presenting good claims to genuineness, are I <sup>25</sup>Clement and Barnabas. I Clement was appended to the NT Codex Alexandrinus, and Barnabas to Codex Sinaiticus. Detailed discussion of them will be deferred to a later connection.

### 4. Apocalyptic Literature.

The NT Book of Revelation, the great Christian Apocalypse, was the original prototype of these later efforts. Apocalyptic activity was widespread among the Jews for two centuries preceding the Christian era, and had its influence upon early Christian thought. Daniel and Ezekiel furnished the pattern for these Jewish efforts. The apocryphal literature of this type is valuable only as exhibiting the extent and characteristic features of this phase of early Christian thought. It is of much less importance even at this point than the like literature of the O. T. Apocrypha, for it had no bearing

upon the first century thought and was not greatly affected by it. To this class belongs the Shepherd of Hermas, but we omit consideration of it until a later phase of the discussion. Two others are worthy of attention.

(1) (*The Apocalypse of Peter.*) This second century product survives in a long fragment of nine leaves, containing almost the entire original document. It begins with a speech of the Lord to Peter, and relates at length a number of visions. It closes with contrasted visions of heaven and hell. The chief witnesses to its antiquity are Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius, and Jerome. It is valuable as reflecting the Hellenistic adaptation of Christian eschatology.

(2) (*The Apocalypse of Paul.*) This is extant in complete form in the original Greek, besides being represented in several translations and recensions. It appears to have been a popular book. There are striking resemblances to the Apocalypse of Peter. It purports to contain an account of Paul's vision in the third heaven (2 Co. 12:2ff). It is claimed that the record of these visions was hidden for many years in Tarsus, until finally brought to light by an angel. The prefect of Tarsus delivered the document to the emperor, who sent it to Jerusalem. The fictitious nature of all this is too palpable to need mentioning. The apocalypse was probably composed in the fourth century, in the vicinity of Jerusalem.

This survey is sufficient to disclose the extent of the literature extant in the early Christian world which presented the same general character as that ultimately included in our NT. That none of it found a place in the canon of Christian Scriptures is at once an evidence

of the Holy Spirit's supervision and a testimony to the acute and thorough testing carried on by the early Christian leaders. It was a process of Spirit-guided criticism. We have seen that the ancient church Fathers set themselves seriously to the task of securing a group of Christian scriptures which would be worthy, reliable and genuine. Within the first four hundred years of Christian history there were both liberal and conservative critics at work on the problems of the NT. The results of their labors had much to do with the final acceptance and confident use of our NT scriptures.



## CHAPTER IV.

### NEW TESTAMENT CRITICISM IN THE MIDDLE AGES.

There was almost nothing in the Bible study of the Middle Ages to which we may properly apply the term criticism. In some places, especially in the monasteries, there was some Bible study going on, but the method was such as to prohibit it from being called in any sense critical. The primitive methods of the Patristic period, though crude when compared with modern processes, were far in advance of any Medieval effort. "During the Middle Ages, when the Bible fell into the hands of sacerdotal and monastic orders, the interpretation of Scripture became more and more artificial, more and more arbitrary. To the infallibility which had been long claimed for Scripture itself there was added a claim to infallibility on the part of the authorized interpreters. Under the Papal Supremacy this claim was enforced, the result being that the laity were practically debarred from the study of the Bible. Although the church of Rome never denied the authority of Scripture, she practically nullified it by her tradition, confirming its use to a privileged class, and preventing her members generally from coming into direct contact with the living and abiding truth which it enshrined" (McClymont, *NT Crit.*, p 10f).

In the study of scripture no regard was paid to the historical setting, contextual considerations were practically ignored, the personality of the writers was purposefully disregarded, and the Bible was treated as a collection of oracles, spoken by God, in utter independ-

ence of human conditions or experience. The processes of interpretation were subjected to the absolute domination of tradition, and the allegorical method employed for the purpose of ascribing to scripture the dogmas promulgated by the church. Such efforts have no place in a history of Biblical criticism. All that can be done in a historical treatment of this period is to show the reasons why critical effort was so entirely lacking. There were four causes for this fact.

1. *The prevalent illiteracy of clergy and people.* There was practically no education carried on in this period, with the exception of the very inadequate sort which still survived in the monasteries. People had little desire to learn and the few who did aspire to knowledge found no facilities with which to obtain it. Ignorance was the rule, and almost the universal rule. The clergy knew nothing, and were permitted to learn nothing, beyond the routine of ecclesiastical services. The monks followed in general only a single beaten trail in their studies, and made no effort at investigation in new fields. Research was a lost art in the middle ages, and research is the chief implement of criticism. The impulse for criticism must result from educational advancement, and its materials must be gathered by the co-operation of many minds, trained for the task. All these elements were excluded from the middle ages by the universal reign of ignorance.

2. *Slow dissemination of ideas.* Criticism is essentially a social process. As observed in the above paragraph, it is a task which requires the cooperation of many minds. These various minds, working in different localities, must have some means of exchanging ideas, and submitting the results of their efforts to the consid-



eration and judgment of others engaged in similar investigations. Almost the only possible medium for such an exchange is the printed page. This the Medieval world did not have. The only transfer of information which could be secured was the laborious process of copying by long hand. This made the circulation of ideas so exceedingly slow as to destroy any incentive to critical effort.

3. *Assumption by the Church of the exclusive prerogative of interpretation.* From the time of Augustine forward it was held that the right of declaring the meaning of scripture was invested entirely and alone in the church, and its voice in the matter consisted in the opinion of the great church fathers of the first five centuries. From 600 on all Biblical study was fettered by tradition. The least departure of any conclusion from the traditional views brought down upon the head of the innovator the condemnation of the Church, and its displeasure was dreaded as nothing else by Medieval Christianity. This conception, which was not only advocated by the church, but subscribed to by all its communicants, made anything like critical effort at Bible study impossible.

4. *Dominance of dogmatic interest.* The few who studied the Bible in the middle ages had no interest in finding out the truth about its origin and literal meaning, but were wholly concerned with harmonizing its teachings with Catholic orthodoxy. The Roman hierarchy had the sole authority of declaring what was or what was not truth, and its representatives in the clergy must see that the scriptures conformed to the word of the Church. Thus the meaning of the scriptures was

warped and twisted in a most shocking fashion to make it fit the dōgmas handed down by tradition and made infallible by the sanction of the Church. Such a spirit and attitude was at the opposite pole from true criticism.

This brief review of Medieval conditions makes it clear why a history of criticism need not pause long at the Middle Ages. The treatment we do give must be negative; that is, instead of tracing the critical effort of the period, we must occupy ourselves with finding out why there was not any.

## CHAPTER V.

### NEW TESTAMENT CRITICISM IN THE REFORMATION PERIOD.

The arbitrary restraints established by Roman hierarchy could not be perpetual. Somewhere the human mind, impelled by the inherent vigor of the Christian religion, must break down the barriers and assert its freedom. "For hundreds of years before the Reformation, forces were at work, both in Church and State, which tended to dispel the darkness in which the Scriptures had been shrouded, and to bring them out of their sacred isolation into touch with the new knowledge which men were everywhere acquiring. The change was due partly to the revival of classical learning, partly to the powerful stimulus given to the intelligence of the laity by the discovery of the New World. A spirit of inquiry was awakened, and when the Reformers set the scriptures free from the bondage of ecclesiastical tradition and put them into the hands of the people, they met one of the great needs of the age. The advantage was specially great in the case of the New Testament, as it was in no sense the product of a priestly or a hermit class, but represented the thought and experience of men who lived among their fellows, and had for its chief subject the ministry of one who was made like unto his brethren, associating with them in their homes, their streets and their market places, as well as in their synagogues. It was an immense gain for the right understanding of such a book when it was set free

1. New Interest<sup>53</sup> in Classics
  2. New World
- } awakening spirit of inquiry

for the study of all ranks and classes" (McClymont, *NT Crit.*, pp. 11f).

The work of the Reformers was not as unbiased and thorough as present-day standards might demand, but none would care to deny that they accomplished the greatest single stroke for the critical study of the Bible which has been witnessed by Christian history. The modern censure registered against them for asserting a "dogma" of infallibility for the scriptures as a substitute for the Papal contention of infallibility for the Church is an expression from the extreme of the reaction against ecclesiastical despotism. That they read many of their views into scripture is true, but we could hardly think of requiring scientific exegesis of those whose early training was all in an environment which was enslaved completely to the interpretation of church tradition, and the idea that only the Church had any right to interpret. It is certainly true that "with all its shortcomings, the Reformation was essentially a critical movement" (McClymont, 13).

#### I. ATTITUDE OF THE REFORMERS.

1. *Luther.* The critical principle advocated by Luther was the right of private judgment in determining the teaching of scripture. The chief proof of its authority he held to be the inner witness of the Spirit. "In the application of this test he was led to set special value on certain books of the New Testament which contained, as he said, the very marrow of the Gospel, and to call in question the claims of books which seemed to be less evangelical. (That which does not teach Christ is not apostolic, though Peter or Paul should have said it; on the other hand, that which preaches Christ would be apostolic, even if it came from Judas, Annas, Herod,

and Pilate.' Again: 'The church can not give more authority or force to a book than it has in itself. A Council can not make that to be scripture which in its own nature is not scripture' " (McClymont, p. 14).

Luther was surprisingly liberal in his opinions about the Bible, so much so that he has been called "the most radical critic of the church of the Reformation." Along with his protest against the ecclesiastical tyranny of Rome, he reacted severely against the Medieval bondage of traditionalism in Bible study. He did not claim that all the scriptures compose the Word of God, but that the Word of God is contained in scripture. He practically admitted the possibility of error in the Bible. In his expressed opinion of individual books, he exhibited a very loose theory of canonicity. He had little regard for the book of Esther; denied the Solomonic authorship of Canticles; and placed Ecclesiastes in the Maccabean period. He disputed the Pauline authorship of Hebrews, suggesting that the book was written by Apollos. James and Jude he thought should be expunged from the canon, describing the former as a "right strawy epistle." He expressed a rather disparaging opinion of Revelation. The Apocrypha he rejected summarily. This fact is significant, when we remember that the Apocrypha had been approved by ancient Church councils, and regarded as a part of the canon for nearly twelve centuries. To reject it was a radical break with tradition; indeed, the most radical step taken by the Reformation, relative to the Bible. Luther blazed the way for this departure.

But in spite of his unnecessarily loose opinions on some matters, there was much in Luther's critical attitude which is worthy of commendation. He insisted upon the necessity for a thorough grammatical knowl-

edge in scripture interpretation, and emphasized the importance of historical and contextual considerations. After he was well advanced in the thirties, he took up the study of Hebrew and Greek, and studied his Bible thereafter in the original languages. His greatest contribution to criticism was his translation of the Bible into German.

2. *Calvin.* Farrar is likely correct in describing Calvin as "the greatest exegete and theologian of the Reformation" (*Hist. of Int.*, p. 342.) But the very fact of his having been such a great theologian diminished his possibilities as Biblical critic. A scholar of strong theological interests can seldom make the most discerning critic. It is also true, however, that the critic who has no theological interest is not fitted for the best critic, because he is devoid of sympathy for the very literature with which he is dealing, and no one can rightly judge any body of literature unless he has a sympathetic appreciation of its contents. This qualification Calvin had, to an eminent degree. (His critical opinions were not as loose as those of Luther, but he was more consistent than Luther in applying his critical methods.) He freely rejected many of the traditional interpretations. Especially advanced was he in his views of Messianic prophecy. That the Old Testament contained Messianic prophecies he readily admitted, but also saw in them their historical reason and original application to conditions with which the author was familiar. His name belongs rightfully in the list of the Biblical critics of history, but would decidedly belong on the side of the conservatives.

"From the authority of the Church Calvin appealed to the testimony of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the

readers, as an all-sufficient evidence of God's word; but in doing so he made Scripture the sole outward standard, leaving no room, in theory, for the authority of tradition, and taking for granted that the testimony of the Holy Spirit would always prove the Bible to be the Word of God" (McClymont, p. 16). The accuracy of this interpretation by McClymont is seen in a quotation from Calvin which he cites. "If we wish to make provision for consciences, so as to keep them from being agitated in perpetual doubt, we must take the authority of the Scriptures as higher than human reasoning or proofs or conjectures. In other words, we must found it on the inner witness of the Holy Spirit. . . . Being then illuminated by His power, we believe, not on our own judgment nor on the judgment of others, that the Scriptures are from God; but above all human judgment, we decide beyond dispute that they were given us from the very mouth of God, just as if with the eye we were contemplating in them the essence of God." (Insts. 1, 7.)

## II. THE BIBLE IN PROTESTANT CONFESSIONS OF FAITH.

(1) The Augsburg Confession. This document was presented at a diet called by Emperor Charles V at Augsburg in 1530. It served as both a declaration of faith and an apology for German Protestantism. ((It contains no definite doctrine of scripture, but takes the authority of the Bible for granted.)) Scripture is freely cited in proof of the various views set forth, and it is stated that in them "there is nothing which is discrepant with the Scriptures" (Art. XXII). X

(2) The First Helvetic Confession. This was the official doctrinal declaration of the Swiss Reformation



adopted by a convention of delegates from seven cities, assembled at Basel on Jan. 30, 1536. The chief object of the conference was to reach an agreement with reference to the significance of the Lord's supper, but other matters were also passed on. The first five articles are devoted to a statement of views concerning the scriptures and their interpretation, and the remaining declarations of faith are based thereon. ((In the first article the scriptures are declared to be holy, godly, and canonical, the word of God, given by the Holy Spirit, and through the Prophets and Apostles, being a sufficient incentive to piety and a sufficient guide to conduct.) The First Helvetic Confession has the distinction of containing the first definite statement of a doctrine of scripture offered by Protestantism. X

(3) The Formula of Concord. In June, 1580, there was published in Germany what was known as *The Book of Concord*, for the purpose of bringing together the various factions of the German reformed party, which had sprung up over differences of doctrine after the death of Luther. It contained several confessions of faith, the last of which was *The Formula of Concord*. This document was adopted by representatives of the various factions of the German reformation at a meeting held in Bergen in May, 1577. ((Its doctrine of scripture is important as representing the crystallized opinion of the German Reformation at an advanced stage. The value which it places upon scripture is quite clear-cut and explicit. It says that "the only standard by which all dogmas and all teachers are to be valued and judged is no other than the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testaments". . . . But other writings, whether of the fathers or of X  
↓



the moderns, with whatever name they come, are in no wise to be equaled to the Holy Scriptures, but are all to be esteemed inferior to them, so that they be not otherwise received than in the rank of witnesses, to show what doctrine was taught after the Apostles' times also, and in what part of the world that more sound doctrine of the Prophets and Apostles has been preserved." (Art. I.)

(4) The Ten Articles and the Thirty-Nine Articles. *Eng*

These two statements of doctrine represent the creed of the English Reformation. The first, the Ten Articles, was adopted by Parliament in 1536, while the Thirty-Nine Articles were adopted by a convocation of English clergy in 1562, and published, with some revisions, in 1563. They give full and emphatic statements of their doctrine of scripture. The Thirty-Nine Articles declare in Art. VI that "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation, so that whatever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of Holy Scriptures we do understand those canonical Books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the church." Then follows a list of the O. T. books which are regarded as canonical, and a separate list of Apocryphal books, which they do not use "to establish any doctrine," but which "may be read for example of life and instruction of manners." Art. VII is devoted to a statement of their attitude toward the Old Testament as compared with the NT, and its moral teachings are obligatory upon the Christian, though its rites and ceremonies are not to be required. X

- Presby* (5) The Westminster Confession. This document, adopted by Parliament in 1648 as a compromise measure for combining the English Church with Scotch Presbyterianism, was really a Presbyterian confession of faith. (It gives the fullest and most complete statement of the Protestant view of Scripture as the inspired and infallible word of God which has ever appeared.) All of Chapter I is devoted to such a statement. The vital core of the view presented is given in section II of the first chapter: "Under the name of holy Scripture, or the word of God written, are now contained all the Books of the Old and New Testament, . . . all of which are given by inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life;" and further in sec. IV, "The authority of the holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church, but upon God (who is truth itself), the Author thereof; and therefore it is to be received because it is the word of God." The remainder of the chapter sets forth the necessity for the aid of the Holy Spirit in understanding scripture, the propriety of translations from the Hebrew and Greek, and the need of comparing scripture with scripture to secure a correct interpretation. The view of the Bible here presented is the one generally held today by Protestant Christianity.

## CHAPTER VI.

### MODERN NEW TESTAMENT CRITICISM.

The theme to which this chapter is devoted is of more profound interest to evangelical Christianity of the present day than any other which it would be possible to suggest. The gravest peril ever faced by the Christian religion lies in the vortex of confusion created by the counter-currents of critical thought sweeping out with all the impetus which can be gathered for them from the divergent and even openly hostile schools of Biblical study. Why do men of such apparently profound scholarship defend such variant and conflicting views? Is there any way for the honest seeker to discover where the truth really lies? Is there no explanation of the distraught condition prevailing throughout the field of Biblical scholarship? Is it worth while to search for common ground upon which to secure final agreement? These are the gravest questions which confront Christendom at the present hour. The place at which we must begin in our quest for an answer is in the history of modern critical movements.

#### I. THE INFLUENCE OF HUMANISM.

In the fourteenth century there began in Italy a movement toward a greater freedom in thought and investigation, which has come to be known as Humanism. It was essentially a reassertion of the independence of the human mind, actuated by a revival of interest in the Greek and Latin classics. The plain facts are that it inherited much of the disposition and viewpoint of

Greek philosophy, and to that extent was a revival of paganism. The disfavor of the Roman church, early manifested toward the movement, gave it an inherent dislike for all ecclesiastical authority. And to it Romanism was the essential expression of all religion, hence its very inception acquired a prejudice against revealed religion. It is known as *humanism* because of its emphasis upon the human as opposed to the divine. The rise and persistence of this anti-religious influence in modern Biblical criticism explains many of its problems. In our treatment of it here we desire to consider first its *origin*, and then its *effects*.

### 1. *Origin.*

(1) *Its Founder.* The earliest evidence of this reaction is to be found in the work of Petrarch, an Italian poet and scholar, born at Arezzo, Italy, July 20, 1304. He exhibited early in life a passionate fondness for the classics, and devoted much time to the study of them. As a poet and rhetorician he had no peer in his day. He is not to be thought of, however, as a reformer; in fact, he was not, strictly speaking, reactionary. He lived a comparatively quiet life, and was universally popular. But in his unobtrusive way he set the pace for the investigation, independence of thought, and self-culture which brought the Renaissance. He may justly be called the pioneer of Humanism.

(2) *Greek Influence.* The next step in the advance of Humanism came with the fall of Constantinople in 1453. When the Greeks were driven out by the cruelty of their Moslem conquerors, they took refuge in Italy, migrating thither by the thousands. They brought with them their Greek literature and culture, and many of

them took up teaching as a means of obtaining a livelihood. The already awakening mind of the Italian race was now seized with a deep craving for new knowledge. But the dogmatism of the Roman Catholic hierarchy thrust restraints in the pathway of intellectual progress. Thus at a very early stage in its growth Humanism became possessed of an intense aversion to religion, and came to regard it as an obstacle to the highest intellectual advancement. Through the Greek classics it became imbued with pagan philosophy, which has characterized its history down to the present time, as it survives in German rationalism.

(3) *The Work of Valla.* Another important factor in the advancement of Humanism, and the one which brought its first open clash with the church, was effected by an Italian named Laurentius Valla. Early in life he manifested liberal tendencies, but the pronounced departure of his views from the stated orthodoxy of Roman Catholicism was fully demonstrated when he wrote his criticism of the so-called "Donations of Constantine" in 1440, proving the document to be a forgery. He freely criticised other documents held sacred by Romanism, and brought down on his head the wrath of the ecclesiastics. But his enemies failed to secure his excommunication, and he died in peace in the very shadow of the Vatican.

By the opening of the sixteenth century Humanism had gained deep root in the intellectual life of Europe. It proved far too elusive to be eradicated by the Church, several of its most ardent adherents remaining formal communicants in the Roman Catholic Church throughout their lives. Some of the pre-eminent representa-

tives, in addition to those already mentioned, were (Boccaccio, Erasmus, Reuchlin, Colet and More.)

## 2. *Effects.*

(1) *General.* From early in the course of its history, on through the centuries, Humanism has continued to react upon Christianity, and to contribute a rationalistic tendency to Christian scholarship. As this rationalistic tendency began to have its effect upon Biblical criticism, the inevitable result was a reaction within the life of standard or orthodox Christianity. The result of this reaction has been a gradual modification of the traditional position. It is in the ultimate result of this reaction in the ranks of orthodoxy that Christianity shall eventually find its fate. A candid and intelligent consideration of this fact is imperative for those who place high religious value upon the teachings of the Bible.

(2) *Particular.* The effect of Humanism upon Biblical criticism may best be seen by noticing how individual humanistic philosophers of the past have influenced the thinking and methods of Biblical criticism. The influence exerted by Erasmus is a veritable commonplace of Christian history, and he, with Colet, More and Reuchlin, was an enthusiastic advocate of the ideals of Humanism. (("Critical of the clergy for illiteracy and immorality and of the Reformers for imprudence and dogmatism he advocated <sup>(1)</sup> general enlightenment, the <sup>(2)</sup> exercise of tolerance, and the restriction of dogma")) (P. G. Mode, in Matthews-Smith *Dic. of Rel. and Eth.*, p. 149). One of the earliest contributions to the critical movement was that of Descartes, the great French philosopher, who "began the method of appeal to rational inquiry in contrast with the theological supernaturalism



of the Middle Ages" (Mathews-Smith: *op. cit.*, p. 129). The Dutch philosopher Spinoza gave himself in a very direct way to the study of theology, and the application of his principles to the problems of religion and morals. Clear traces of his philosophy may be detected especially in the theology of Schleiermacher whose "doctrine of God owes much to Spinoza, especially when he expounds the relation of God to the world" (Hastings: *Ency. of Rel. and Ethics*, xi, p. 238). ~~Spinoza's notion of substance as fundamental in every category of being is admitted to have deeply influenced Schleiermacher's idea of God.~~ Pantheism

In England theological development and Biblical criticism of the late seventeenth and the eighteenth century was considerably influenced by the empirical psychology and philosophy of John Locke. Applying his philosophical principles to religion, he maintained that the important thing in Christianity was the individual experience in Christ, and not the dogmas of Christian theology. He may be described as a moderate rationalist. With him we may associate the name of David Hume, who created considerable agitation by his discussion of miracles. These two found an effective successor in Coleridge, who "exercised a wide influence on religious thinking early in the 19th century. Under the stimulus of German idealistic philosophy he expounded religion on the basis of moral and rational principles in contra-distinction to the appeal to external authority" (Mathews-Smith: *op. cit.*, p. 104).

Returning to the Continent, we enter a new era in the development of philosophy with the work of Immanuel Kant, Germany's greatest philosopher. The extent of his influence in the realm of theology and

criticism cannot be estimated. Some of the earliest effects may be found in the works of the rationalistic critic Herder, who was himself an acknowledged humanistic philosopher. "Attending Kant's lectures, he was stimulated to critical inquiry and read widely" (Hastings: *op. cit.*, vi, p. 594). The effects of Kant's philosophy are to be seen in the work of the German rationalist Ammon, who wrote a Life of Jesus which exhibited "a very respectful attitude toward Strauss," and in which "there is a vigorous survival of a peculiar kind of rationalism inspired by Kant" (Schweitzer: *op. cit.*, p. 104). It likewise appears that Kant influenced Paulus, another German critic of extremely liberal views, and who was also closely associated with Hegel in educational work in Bavaria. Kant exercised considerable influence over the theology of Ritschl, who in turn greatly affected the criticism of his own and succeeding generations. Scarcely second to Kant in his power over other minds was Hegel, who "created a characteristic theology which could make use of the conceptions of divine immanence . . . . without falling into pantheism" (Mathews-Smith: *op. cit.*, p. 200). Strauss was so completely dominated by him that Schweitzer describes Strauss as "the apostle of Hegel," and says of his Life of Jesus that it was "steeped in the Hegelian theory" (*op. cit.*, pp. 71, 194). Hegel also exerted a great influence over Baur and Ritschl, with a host of lesser lights among German radicals. The influence of Darwin and Huxley and Herbert Spencer over English and American critics needs only to be mentioned.

When we come to examine the dates at which these philosophers lived we discover that there extends an unbroken chain of humanistic influence from the dawn



of the fourteenth century until the present time. A chronological list of these philosophers may be given as follows: Petrarch, 1304-1374; Valla, 1406-1457; Erasmus, 1466-1536; Descartes, 1596-1650; Spinoza, 1632-1677; Locke, 1632-1704; Hume, 1711-1776; Kant, 1724-1804; Hegel, 1770-1831; Coleridge, 1772-1834; Darwin, 1809-1882; Huxley, 1825-1895; Spencer, 1820-1903. It will be seen that these dates touch every century from Petrarch to the present time. But these more prominent points of personal influence are but the conspicuous incidents of a continuous process of historical development covering the last five centuries. It is this persistent stream of humanistic influence, with its pagan origin and innate aversion to revealed religion, which, more than all else, has had to do with the spirit of liberal criticism in modern times. The objections to the supernatural in Christianity have not been made necessary so much by an unbiased examination of the facts as by this humanistic interpretation of the facts. No reconciliation need ever be hoped for between the present offspring of Humanism and evangelical or orthodox Christianity. The conflict is to be ultimately decided by the comparative force of the appeal made by each to the real heart of the human race. It is a question as to which has the best to offer to both the rationality and religious instincts of the race—its cultural demands and practical needs. The prospects for this combination are decidedly favorable to evangelical Christianity, though likely not within the exact limits of “orthodoxy.”

## II. STAGES OF PROGRESS

In the development of modern NT criticism there are certain fairly well marked stages of advancement.

They are not chronological periods of fixed time limits, for no historical process submits itself to rigid chronological division, but they represent the dominance for a longer or shorter time of a certain critical interest. Other interests were always in the field at the same time, and were experiencing an advancement of their own, but a particular one naturally held pre-eminence.

1. Through the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth century chief interest was accorded to the *text* of the NT. It is natural that with the earliest awakening of a critical impulse attention should be turned to the task of securing the actual words of the sacred text as they were originally written. The history of the details of this development will be discussed in a later section.

2. In the nineteenth century attention was centered on the *historical reliability* of these ancient Christian documents. The quickened critical sense of Christian scholarship divested them of their traditional veil of superstitious awe, and saw them as a part of the literary remains of the past. Whatever else the Christian scriptures might possess, all of their transcendental qualities must be established upon demonstrable facts discernible in their own contents and history. Had it not been for the unfortunate conflict perpetually raging between humanistic license and ecclesiastical dogmatism, if with a cordial understanding and mutual helpfulness the Christian scholars had worked in harmony at this momentous problem, humanity might today be far richer in its spiritual assets. But the century had to witness an unrelenting warfare, waged in defense of technical orthodoxy on the one hand, and for the absolute annihilation of tradition and supernaturalism on the other. Out of this struggle the NT has emerged into

the twentieth century with its general historical validity established beyond any reasonable question, but with many disagreements yet remaining relative to several specific problems.

3. The dawn of the twentieth century brought a quickening of interest in *the origin and function of primitive Christian ideas and institutions*. Scholars today are seeking an answer to the question, What and whence was first century Christianity? Its original character, the factors which produced it, and its reaction upon the world about it, are now the points of leading interest. Just here the infant science of *Comparative Religions* is called into service. The relation of Christianity to other religious currents in the early centuries of its history is being diligently investigated. The first reaction of the gospel upon contemporaneous life is being considered as never before. That is, NT scholarship is now setting itself assiduously to the task of understanding primitive Christianity in its human setting. Of this line of endeavor the most devout need have no fear, for it only means the bringing of the NT into more intimate touch with real life. In line with this new emphasis there has come an increased interest in the interpretation of the actual text of the NT. It seems that the twentieth century has brought us to the core of all critical investigation, and is making possible the study of our problems in the light of the real facts. One who objects to this procedure is unworthy of the noble task of NT criticism, and is a traitor to the highest conception of faith.

### III. FIELDS OF OPERATION.

We have seen in the preceding section that different centuries have witnessed the ascendancy of varying crit-

ical interests in NT study. It is also true that no single scholar has been able to cover the entire scope of NT scholarship. The task has developed, in the course of its progress, some four distinct divisions. We have seen that the earliest interest was *textual criticism*. It was but slightly later that there came a widespread interest in *translation*. The accentuated historical interest of the nineteenth century of course directed attention to the *Life of Christ* and the *Apostolic Age*. Therefore in this order we may treat these different fields.

#### I. TEXTUAL CRITICISM.

There have appeared in the course of the last four centuries approximately 1000 editions of the Greek Testament (cf. Nestle, *Textual Crit. of Gk. Test.*, p. 5). Of course their value has been exceedingly varied. Some are still, and will ever be, treasured as a priceless heritage of Christian scholarship; many have been practically worthless. Between these two extremes range hundreds of other editions. To give even bare mention to all would be a useless waste of time and energy, even if the data were at hand to investigate—which is not the case. It is amply sufficient for the average student to survey the general outlines of the historical developments in the field of textual criticism, forming an acquaintance with only those names which have denoted a really effective influence in the progress of the science. When we contemplate the entire history in its larger perspective we discern three fairly distinct stages of development.

(1) Development of the TEXTUS RECEPTUS.  
This "Received Text" was a text of the Greek NT

which had for a long period general recognition in Protestant Christianity as being authentic, for reasons which will appear below. It was not by any means a really critical text, being based upon MSS of very doubtful value, mostly those of medieval origin. Yet, strange to say, it held the almost superstitious reverence of Protestant Christianity for about two hundred years. In fact, the history of textual criticism in the modern period is largely a history of the breaking away from the bondage of the *Textus Receptus*. This text of course came as an unplanned development in the course of Protestant history, but the high regard for it seemed almost to imply a conviction in ecclesiastical circles that it had been handed down direct from heaven. As a matter of fact, it was a product of the earliest and most primitive efforts in textual criticism—if criticism it may be called.

Probably the first person to conceive the idea of editing the NT in Greek for general use was Aldus Manutius, a Venetian publisher. He is reported to have had some correspondence relative to such an undertaking shortly prior to 1500, but his purpose was never carried into effect. The honor of the first printed Greek text belongs to Cardinal Ximenes, an eminent Spanish churchman, who completed his edition in 1514. The NT contained the Greek and Latin; the Old Testament the Greek, Latin and Hebrew. This combination of texts and the fact that it was printed in Complutum, Spain, gave to it the name *Complutensian Polyglot*. Though the printing was completed in 1514, the Pope declined to permit the public circulation of the edition until 1520. For this reason the distinction of preparing the first *published* edition of the Greek Testament

belongs to Erasmus. It was published in Basel, Switzerland, in 1516, having occupied less than a year in preparation. But little critical effort was expended upon it (as Erasmus himself confessed), and the sources were largely late medieval MSS, with one ancient codex of inferior value (Cursive No. 1). Six verses in Revelation were translated by Erasmus from the Latin Vulgate, to splice out a deficiency in the single MS of that book which he possessed. The edition thus produced with its four successors of slightly improved character, wielded a tremendous influence over subsequent efforts in this field. It was the chief basis of Robert Stephen's edition of 1551 and Beza's edition of 1565. An edition based upon some critical effort was published by Colinaeus in 1534, but this seems to have exerted but little influence. ((Stephen's 1551 text became the *Textus Receptus* of England, and the 1565 edition of Beza was the basis of an edition published in 1632 by the Elzevir brothers, of Leyden, Holland, which became the *Textus Receptus* of the continent.)) Nearly all subsequent editions for many generations were based upon these "Received Texts." They were actually thought of by some as possessed of a divine authority.

There were, however, in this period three developments which proved of value to later stages of textual effort.

a. The growing interest in the printing of the Greek text inevitably led to the collection of manuscripts at certain centers where they became more readily accessible to scholars who desired to consult them.

b. The size of the Greek text of the NT was re-



duced from the bulky folio of the old codices to a convenient octavo volume, or even in some instances duodecimo and smaller.

c. Robert Stephen's edition of 1551 was the first printed text of scripture to contain our modern verse divisions. The division into chapters had been accomplished early in the thirteenth century (1204-6) by Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury.

(2) *Introduction of the Critical Method.* Up to 1700 the editing of Greek texts had been little more than a matter of printing whatever copies of the MSS could be secured by the publisher or editor. Little care had been exercised to secure a reliable text. Real textual criticism may be said to begin with the opening decades of the eighteenth century. The first serious break from the *Textus Receptus* was accomplished by John Mill, an English scholar, who published an edition in 1707 on which he had spent thirty years of labor. While to the modern critic the advance made seemed to scarcely justify the extent of the effort, it was a significant step in the right direction. Though the text itself was no great improvement on its predecessors, it was the occasion of Mill gathering together an abundance of textual material, and producing a textual apparatus and Prolegomena of some real value. The way had been prepared for the work of Mill by Richard Simon's *Histoire Critique du Texte du Nouveau Testament*, issued in 1689, and the edition of John Fell in 1675. The work of further collecting witnesses to the text was forwarded by Richard Bentley, who died in 1742 without having issued an edition of his own.

(3) *Organization of Materials.* The names men-

tioned in the preceding section represent only a part of the heroic effort made between 1650 and 1750 to produce a critical text. The chief reason for the failure of this effort was the lack of an efficient system for the employment of textual evidence. An abundance of textual material had been brought to light, but it needed to be organized. The reducing of this array of witnesses to usable order was the task of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and has given to us our present day reliable text. It had already been recognized that witnesses to the text might be of widely different value, but principles for determining this variation in merit were wanting. The real pioneer in this effort was J. A. Bengel (d. 1752), whose most important contribution to the textual criticism of the Greek New Testament consists in the (sound critical principles which he laid down.) He recognized that the witnesses must not be counted but weighed, i. e., classified, and he was accordingly the first to distinguish two great groups or families of manuscripts" (Nestle, *Textual Crit.*, p. 17). He adopted the suggestion already made by Bentley that there should be discrimination between ancient and later manuscripts. He divided the witnesses into African and Asiatic, and redivided the African into two sub-groups. To the African he assigned the greater value, in which he is supported by later scholarship. Bengel was one of the first to formulate definite principles for the employment of textual evidence.

The work thus begun by Bengel was considerably aided by the contribution of Wettstein and Semler, but the name to which we must ascribe the chief honor for the ushering in of the modern method is Griesbach, "the first in Germany who ventured to print the text



of the New Testament in the form to which his criticism led him" (Nestle, *Textual Crit.*, p. 18). He proposed a threefold classification of the documents, the Alexandrian, Western, and Constantinopolitan. This approaches remarkably near to the accepted classification of the present time. His edition of the Greek text, which first appeared in 1803, was based upon some real principles of criticism. But in reality, the first thoroughly critical text of modern times, that is, the first to wholly disregard the *Textus Receptus*, was that of Lachmann, issued in 1831. To him is accorded the distinction of "giving the world for the first time a text founded everywhere on evidence" (Warfield, *Txtl. Crit.*, p. 224). He established the Greek text of the NT upon a reliable footing, whereon later scholars might build with a large degree of confidence. Among the many who have wrought upon this foundation four names are pre-eminent: Tischendorf, Tregelles, Westcott, and Hort. The first was a German scholar, the other three British.

The work of Tischendorf was vast in extent and incalculable in value. Many ancient MSS were discovered and collated by him which are now regarded as of first rank in importance. Perhaps the most conspicuous achievement of his life was the discovery of Codex Sinaiticus, which he found at St. Catherine's Monastery on Mt. Sinai in 1859, after a most trying but romantic experience. This manuscript was regarded by him as first in value as a witness to the text of the NT, though Westcott and Hort placed it second, ascribing the primary importance to Codex Vaticanus. But Vaticanus does not contain quite all the NT, breaking off at the ninth chapter of Hebrews, so that Sinaiticus has the

unrivalled distinction of being the oldest known manuscript which contains the entire NT. In the thirty-one years from 1841 to 1872 Tischendorf issued eight editions of the Greek text of the NT. His eighth edition is the standard Greek text of the continent to the present day.

Contemporaneous with Tischendorf was the work of Tregelles in England. Quite early in his career as a NT scholar he broke with the *Textus Receptus*, and launched out for the construction of a text on reliable critical methods. His edition of the Greek Testament, published in parts from 1857-1872, was based on much original investigation of the textual sources, especially the ancient uncial manuscripts. To minuscule manuscripts he gave but little attention. He seems to have been considerably influenced by Tischendorf, and produced a text quite similar to his, but nevertheless made to textual criticism a contribution of real and lasting value.

(The abiding monument in the field of textual criticism for the English-speaking world is the great edition of Westcott and Hort, first issued in 1881.) The work was published in two volumes, the first containing the text, the second setting forth the critical principles upon which it was based. These two scholars spent thirty years in the preparation of this text, and the effort still remains without a parallel. Their most distinguished contribution was in their organization of the textual material. This they divided into four types of reading: the Syrian, representing a late text of slight value, which resulted from a combination of the corrupt texts preceding it; the Western, an early text, but exhibiting the results of free and careless handling; the Alex-

andrian, a fairly reliable text, but vitiated in many places by an effort to improve its literary character; and the Neutral, which is the nearest approach to the original apostolic text to be found in the extant material. (The two pre-eminent representatives of the Neutral text are Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, to the former of which they assigned first place.) Their method was to examine first the reading itself; then the documents which supported it, both as to their own character and the character of the group in which they belonged; and, as a final test, to seek as far as possible to reconstruct the history of each group or type of text.

The text and method of Westcott and Hort, the critical apparatus of Tischendorf, and the collation of the minuscule manuscripts by Von Soden, present the basis upon which future efforts in textual criticism must be made. This carries us back with reasonable assurance to the text of at least A. D. 300, and eliminates all serious defects. There yet remains in the pursuit of textual criticism one other stage which we may describe as *the determination of the original Apostolic text*. This presents a most difficult and delicate undertaking, for so much of it depends upon conjecture, which "is not to be employed . . . until all the methods of criticism have been exhausted, and unless clear occasion for its use can be shown in each instance" (Warfield, *Textl. Crit.*, p. 209). Advancement by this method must be slow and cautious, and tried at each step by every conceivable test. The facts are that we may safely accept the Westcott and Hort text as a very close approximation of the original text of the autographs, and there should be no departure from it without the most convincing evidences.

## II. TRANSLATION.

The story of how the Bible made its way, with its divine message of hope and comfort, from the cloistered confines of Roman Catholic dogmatism into the hand and heart, needs and experience, of the ordinary man, the field in which it could really bear its characteristic harvest, is as romantic as any drama in all the world's fiction. It began with veiled and crude efforts, but issued in some of the highest accomplishments of Christian scholarship. It is a real and important part of the history of criticism, and may be treated under three heads.

(1) *The Early Paraphrasts.* The first efforts at the translation of the Bible had neither critical nor doctrinal ends in view. The object was purely edification. Consequently, accurate *verbatim* translations were not sought. It was not the exact words of scripture which were desired, but its practical religious instruction and inspiration. This resulted in a free rendering of the mere thought of scripture into the language of the people: a scriptural paraphrase. These paraphrases date back as far as the eighth century, and begin in the form of poetry in the work of the Anglo-Saxon Caedmon. Probably fragments of his work are still extant. A short while later similar efforts began in Germany, being at first chiefly in verse, but later appearing in prose paraphrase, resulting finally in a rendering of nearly all the historical portions of the Bible. To the same period and type belongs the work of Venerable Bede, who translated the Gospel of John into Anglo-Saxon. In other Euro-

pean countries, especially France, Spain and Poland, fitful efforts were being made, but only little is known of their history.

(2) *The Pioneer Translators.* Certainly the honor of being the earliest pioneer in the field of real Bible translation belongs to John Wycliffe, who issued his English Bible in 1382. He accomplished the task in the face of the bitterest opposition from the Roman Catholic authorities, who sought not only to suppress the work of translation, but to prevent its distribution. The translation was made from the Latin Vulgate, and hence was textually very imperfect, but the translation itself was simple, clear and excellent. Since printing had not yet been invented, copies had to be produced by hand.

(It appears that the first real translation which was produced on the continent was made in 1532, when a Frenchman named LeFevre began to issue a version of the Bible in the French vernacular.) (Ten years later Luther placed the Bible in the hands of the German people in their native tongue.) These efforts marked the beginning, from which the work of translation moved steadily forward.

The second great effort at the translation of the Bible into English was made by William Tyndale. He too met with violent opposition from the ecclesiastical authorities, but there were two new factors which entered into this work to make it more successful than that of Wycliffe. In the first place, the advance of the revival of learning had aroused interest in the original text, and led Tyndale to make his translation from the Greek instead of the Latin. The second was printing, which by this time had been invented, and which of course greatly facilitated the circulation of the new

translation. On account of the severe opposition of the Roman Church the printing was done in Germany, where Protestant influence had sufficiently advanced to make it possible. A complete edition of the NT was ready for distribution by 1525, being revised and re-issued in 1535. Some work was likewise done on the Old Testament.

After Tyndale's work there followed Miles Coverdale's translation of the Bible in 1535, with a second edition in 1537; John Roger's translation, known as "Matthew's Bible," in 1537; and Richard Taverner's Bible in 1539. By this time the third stage had already been reached, and the first of the great versions was already in progress.

(3) *The Great Versions*. We confine ourselves now to English translations, and only the chief of those. Since the dawn of the Reformation the Bible has been rendered into scores of languages and multiplied by hundreds of editions. We have seen that the earlier efforts in England were made by single individuals, and in the face of violent opposition. But before the middle of the sixteenth century a brighter day had dawned and groups of devout, scholarly men were authorized to render the Bible into the tongue of the masses. ((The first effort of this sort was made in 1538-39, in the publication of what has come to be known as The Great Bible, because of its enormous size (13x17 inches), and also called "Cranmer's Bible" (the 1540 edition of it) because of the part taken in its publication by that churchman.)) The work of printing it began in France, but a reversal of the attitude of the French authorities drove the workmen to England. They were favored with the good fortune of carrying most of their mate-



rial and facilities with them. The next version of importance appeared twenty years later, the interruption in the work of translation being due to a revival of ecclesiastical opposition. This was the Geneva Bible, printed in Geneva and published in 1560. It was a product of more real scholarship and criticism than had been bestowed upon the preceding version. It was followed shortly by the Bishop's Bible, issued in 1568, so called because published under episcopal authority and supervision, being little more than a revision of the Great Bible. It was published with the hope that it might become the popular edition, and supplant the Geneva Bible, but it failed to attain to its intended place. (( Of special interest is the first Roman Catholic edition of an English Bible. The NT was issued by a group of Catholic exiles in Rheims in 1582, and circulated in England. The Old Testament did not appear until 1609 and came from Douay, whence the name of the entire Bible as *The Douay Version*.)

An entire and very important chapter in the history of the English Bible is occupied by the version of 1611, known as the "King James," or *Authorized Version*. It was prepared by a group of Anglican divines, and duly sanctioned by King James himself, and hence regarded as in a special sense *authorized*. For nearly three centuries it held the field practically without a rival, and was, indeed, a noble and worthy effort for its time. Many changes had to be made in the language from time to time because of modification in the meaning of terms or modes of expression, but no definite revision was made until the publication of the Revised Version by English and American scholars, the NT appearing in 1881 and the Old Testament in 1885. Still further revision was made in the *American Stand-*

*ard Version* of 1901, which is rapidly taking the field of Protestant Christianity in the United States. Laudable efforts have been made by individual scholars in the work of NT translation, too many to be discussed here.

### 3. *Life of Christ.*

In this field the interest of modern NT criticism has been most intense, and naturally so, for all the problems of Christian history converge at this point. The brunt of philosophical prejudice has spent its greatest violence against this central citadel of Christian faith. Here is presented at once the stronghold of evangelical truth, and the most difficult problem of destructive criticism. To explain the Man of Galilee, and to reduce Him to the category of ordinary humanity, has been the chief difficulty and supreme effort of modern infidelity. But in spite of all their efforts, Jesus Christ remains still, and shall ever remain, the unchallenged ideal of the human race. Even the most liberal critic must confess that "a mighty spiritual force streams forth from Him and flows through our time also. This fact can neither be shaken nor confirmed by any historical discovery. It is the solid foundation of Christianity" (Schweitzer, *Quest for Hist. Jesus*, p. 397). So "whatever may be the unexpected phenomena of the future, Jesus will not be surpassed. His worship will constantly renew its youth, the tale of his life will cause ceaseless tears, his sufferings will soften the best hearts; all the ages will proclaim that, among the sons of men, there is none who is greater than Jesus" (Renan: *Life of Jesus*, p. 393).

When we contemplate the history of the modern study of the Life of Christ in its larger perspective, we



perceive four fairly well defined stages. The earliest efforts (prior to 1778) did little more than piece together the gospel records, much as Tatian's Diatessaron had done. That is, the method amounted to nothing more than *harmony and paraphrase of the four gospels*. The first critical impulse came from a *rationalistic reaction* (1778 to 1835), which sought to explain away the supernatural. The failure of this effort was followed by an attempt at a *mythological explanation* (1835 to 1864), which took the gospel stories as chiefly myths, with a remote and little known historical basis. Candid and careful investigation of the literary sources gradually undermined this hypothesis, so that in the final stage (1864 to the present) NT criticism stands in frank perplexity before *the problem of the historical Jesus*. The date limits proposed for these stages are merely approximations.

(1) *Gospel Harmony and Paraphrase*. The first efforts of Protestant scholars to gather together the data of the Life of Christ were not with any thought of critical examination, but only to secure convenience and facilitation in study. Not only did they not realize that there was any necessity for a scientific treatment of this sacred field, but the opportunity and method had never been disclosed to them. They pieced together the fragmentary accounts of the four gospels, and were content without further light, unconscious of the vast oceans of enthralling truth into which these glistening bays could lead them. They coincided in the opinion expressed by Luther: "The Gospels follow no order in recording the acts and miracles of Jesus, and the matter is not, after all, of much importance" (quoted by Schweitzer, *Quest of the Hist. Jesus*, p. 13). The earliest steps in the

direction of systematic study of the Life of Christ were the "Harmonies," such as that by John Lightfoot in 1644. When an effort was made to gather this material together in coherent and continuous form, it was done by merely paraphrasing the gospel records. Of the work of this character the best product, and the one which came at the transition to a more critical stage, was the *Life of Jesus* published by J. J. Hess in 1768. The author was a rationalist, and found considerable difficulty with the miraculous in the gospels, but in the main the details of his picture of Christ were in harmony with the NT. His work closed the first period of the history and opened the second; not that his was the last *Life of Christ* produced by that method, but a new method had been inaugurated which was destined to gain the ascendancy.

(2) *The Rationalistic Reaction.* It is one of the strange things of human history that Christian thought has never ventured into new fields and taken on new forms until some great revolution has threatened its very life. As the destructive earthquake causes the inhabitants of a city to remove the old and outgrown structures and build new and better ones in their places, so the seismic impact of adverse criticism has oftentimes aroused Christianity to a consciousness of its intellectual powers and historical heritage, and caused it to build anew and more durable the bulwarks of its faith. This process has been conspicuously true in the study of the Life of Christ. It was the upheaval of an intensely hostile onslaught which brought Protestant scholars to the adoption of critical and trustworthy methods.

The first serious rupture in the traditional treatment of the Life of Christ came in 1778 when Lessing

published as an anonymous fragment a dissertation by H. S. Reimarus on *The Aims of Jesus and His Disciples*. It represented Jesus as setting out to be the mere political deliverer of the Jews, but meeting with unexpected defeat and disaster and dying in an agony of disappointment. To save their cause from complete and final annihilation, the disciples of Jesus resorted to the less popular form of Messianic hope, the apocalyptic view. This led to the invention of the resurrection, the promulgation of the parousia theory, and the other apocalyptic ideas of first century Christianity. That Reimarus utterly missed the mark even the most liberal critic of today will not hesitate to admit. But he did initiate an impetus to the critical study of the subject which proved ultimately to be a blessing. His arguments were answered with temporary success by J. S. Semler of Halle, who published a reply the following year.

Of some real critical value was the work published by Reinhard in 1781. He accepted in part the supernatural as historically true, but sought by rationalistic methods to explain much of it away. He attached but little value to miracles as an apologetic expedient. A much greater advance was made in the work of J. G. Herder, whose first publication appeared in 1796. He was the first to succeed in bringing the attention of NT scholarship to the difference between the Synoptics and the Gospel of John. He discerned the undeniable Greek character of the Fourth Gospel, and the large element of reflection which it contained. He did not regard this, however, as any reason for rejecting the Fourth Gospel as a source in the study of the Life of Christ. Save for his rationalistic tendencies, Herder presents a noble and laudable effort in forwarding the critical

method. The critical method is still further promoted in the works of Paulus (1828) and Hase (1829), but these scholars yielded far more than Herder to the rationalistic prejudice against miracles.

(3) *The Mythological Theories.* The historic successor of Reimarus was a scholar whose very name is the epitome of destructive criticism and a signal for the recoil of orthodoxy. He was David Friedrich Strauss (1808-1874). His *Life of Jesus* was published in 1835. So sweeping was his rejection of the supernatural Christ of theology that he left only a figment of the historical Jesus. The reaction against him in both Germany and England was terrific, and resulted in the loss of his teaching position. He was retired on a small pension, and continued his study of various phases of literary and historical criticism. From time to time he issued revised editions of his *Life of Jesus*. The agitation caused by his work extended practically to the end of the nineteenth century. The most effective answer to his criticism was published by Neander, the great church historian. Neander's work was vitiated by some unnecessary concessions to the liberal position, but was in the main a great devotional effort. It proved far more popular with the reading public than the work of his unbelieving competitor.

Strauss was the apostle of the mythological theory, and succeeded in so thoroughly fixing the vogue of this doctrine in the life of liberal criticism that its spell has not yet been completely broken. Nevertheless, the "Christ-myth" has now been reduced to a "legendary accretion." "Myth formed, to use Strauss's illustration, the lofty gateways at the entrance to, and at the exit from, the Gospel history; between these two lofty gate-

ways lay the narrow and crooked streets of the naturalistic explanation" (Schweitzer, *Quest*, etc., p. 78). And even the intervening "crooked streets" became a hazy labyrinth under the mythological interpretation of Strauss. Not only are the birth-stories myths, but the baptism is encrusted in legend and the temptation has no historical basis. Nearly every detail of the active ministry of Jesus is found to reflect the creative power of primitive Christian imagination, and even the teachings of Jesus are stripped of their originality and genuineness and filled with legendary accretions. He rejected entirely the historical validity of the Fourth Gospel, and found "in the Synoptists several different strata of legend and narrative, which in some cases intersect and in some are superimposed one upon the other" (Schweitzer, *Quest*, p. 82). As a bold stroke of dauntless and untrammelled genius we can but admire his effort, and the pathos of his life extorts our pity, but we look in vain for some real and positive contribution which he made to the progress of NT criticism. What he contributed was of an exclusively negative nature.

The most important follower of Strauss in Germany was C. H. Weisse, who took the methods which Strauss had applied in a general way to the gospel narrative as a whole, and applied them to a more specific study of the gospels themselves. His contribution of real value was to call attention to the evidences for the priority of Mark's Gospel. The natural successor to Strauss in historical significance, though very different in viewpoint and method, was the great French infidel and NT critic, Ernest Renan, who published a *Life of Jesus* in 1863. His work was remarkable for its rhetorical finish and dramatic effect, and achieved more real damage to evangelical Christianity than did the work

of Strauss. It resorted to the old rationalistic explanation of miracles, and lacked the bold directness of Strauss' work. It made no material contribution to criticism.

(4) *The Problem of the Historical Jesus*. That NT criticism of the liberal wing came abruptly, by a distinguishable crisis, face to face with the historical reality and import of Jesus, is not the idea we wish to present. It was only by a gradual process, covering several decades, that the abandonment of the mythological presupposition was effected. The tendency first made its distinct appearance in the seventh decade of the past century, so we have indicated the transition at that date. We have set the dividing line at 1864 because in that year there appeared two works, though not so epoch-making in themselves, yet marking the development of two features in the critical study of the Life of Christ which are pre-eminent in the field at the present time. One was K. H. Weizsaker's *Studies in the Gospel History*, which was an investigation of great critical merit into the literary sources of the Life of Christ: the four Gospels. "His account of the sources is one of the clearest that has ever been written" (Schweitzer, *Quest*, 207). The other was a book produced by the Frenchman, Colani, on the problem of current Jewish eschatology as it affected Jesus and his purposes. These have been the questions of absorbing interest in this field of study for sixty years. The latter problem has led to two others: the real content of the Messianic consciousness of Jesus and the extent of the purely ethical element in his teaching. It all resolves itself into the ultimate problem, Was the historical Jesus a universal Redeemer, or was he merely a Jewish Messiah?



The criticism of the literary sources really began with Herder, in the last decade of the eighteenth century, when he discerned the difference between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics. The next step came in the discovery of the priority of Mark by Weisse, who first published his findings in 1838. This critical theory, which has proven of incalculable value in the study of the Gospels, was further advanced by Wilke (1838) and Bruno Bauer (1840-50). There was considerable reaction against it, but the opposition proved unsuccessful. Thus the way was prepared for the work of H. J. Holtzmann (1863) and Weizsacker (1864). The former demonstrated beyond dispute the validity of the "Marcan Hypothesis," while the latter advocated the historical value of John as well as Mark. Bernhard Weiss, a conservative scholar, wrote a *Life of Jesus* in 1882, in which he made Mark the chief basis, and which presented a scholarly defence of the orthodox point of view. Two more recent *Lives* by conservative scholars are those of Farrar and Edersheim. Still more recent is the work of David Smith, *In the Days of His Flesh*.

The study of the sources has now taken form in the criticism of the Fourth Gospel and the investigation of the Synoptic Problem. Prominent names in connection with the study of the Fourth Gospel are Wendt, H. J. Holtzmann and Schmiedel of Germany; William Sanday of England; and Ezra Abbott, E. F. Scott, and Benjamin Bacon of America. Many other names of probably equal rank might be added. In the study of the Synoptic Problem the pre-eminent name in Germany is Adolf Harnack, while in England Sir John Hawkins and William Sanday have taken the lead, aided by the collaboration of several other highly proficient scholars.



The leading authority in this country is President E. D. Burton of the University of Chicago.

In the other line of criticism of the Life of Christ, namely, his relation to contemporaneous Judaism, Colani (1864) may be regarded as the pioneer. Glimpses of this field of investigation had been caught by previous critics, but none had seriously set themselves to a mastery of the problem. In fact, previous criticism had been mainly destructive; now it turns along fairly constructive lines. There were many who aided in forwarding this phase of the study, of whom the most important was Baldensperger, in his book on *The Self-Consciousness of Jesus in the Light of the Messianic Hopes of His Time* (1888). His theory is summarized by Sanday as follows: "According to Baldensperger, the primary constituent in the consciousness of Jesus was the sense of a unique relation to God. Onto this consciousness there were grafted the Jewish conceptions of the Messiah and the kingdom of God; and these ideas were more and more spiritualized, until everything earthly and political was stripped from them. For a long time, from motives connected with our Lord's method of teaching, no direct claim was put forward; in particular, all that might serve to excite political passion was carefully avoided. The disciples were left to draw their own inferences. At last, at Cæsarea Philippi, Peter made his bold avowal. But from that time the inevitable end was coming into view. Jesus Himself began definitely to prepare His disciples for it; but, in doing so, He took up another side of the Jewish expectation; beyond the descent into the valley of death, He saw His own return 'in power and great glory'" (*Life of Christ in Recent Research*, p. 55). With sufficient allowance made for the liberal views of this German scholar, we have in this summary

of Baldensperger's view a comprehensive sketch of the problem. To this important question some of the best scholarship of Germany has been devoted. In the list there appear with special note the names of Beyschlag, Johannes Weiss, Bousset, Schurer and Wrede.

Without doubt, the most valuable contribution which has yet been made by German scholarship to the study of the Life of Christ is Albert Schweitzer's *Quest of the Historical Jesus* (Eng. trans., 1910). It is a thorough historical sketch of the criticism in this field from Reimarus to Wrede. The author is rankly liberal, and confessedly one-sided in his treatment, but he has produced a thesaurus of historical data which is invaluable as an aid to the study of criticism. Alongside of him we must also place the work of that noble English conservative, of blessed memory, William Sanday: *The Life of Christ in Recent Research* (1908). By the aid of these two splendid books the study of the Life of Christ, by all odds the most vital phase of NT criticism, looms up in vivid and clear perspective. A study of them brings one to the heartening knowledge that after a hundred and fifty years of criticism, far the greater part of which has been destructive in its general direction, Jesus of Nazareth stands out before the world of NT scholarship in the undeniable lineaments of a marvelous historical character. The study of the four Gospels has largely dissolved the mists of legend with which Strauss and his school sought to envelop the Master, and the examination of the apocalyptic hypothesis has brought the reconstruction of His historical background so that we no longer gaze upon the vague outlines of an ethereal being, illumined only by the nimbus of a superficial religious sentiment, but the critic of this hour lives in entranced contemplation of a unique and

marvelously real person, who moves upon the stage of historical action with all the definite attributes and relations of a historical personage, and yet with an added transcendence which utterly separates him from the normal category of human beings. We have been brought into the living presence of the historical Jesus! In reverence and adoration NT scholarship is now confronted with the task of accounting for and interpreting this marvelous historical personality. Even the most rankly liberal critic does not hesitate to confess in thrilling admiration that "He comes to us as One unknown, without a name, as of old, by the lake-side, He came to those men who knew him not. He speaks to us the same word: 'Follow thou me!' and sets us to the task which He has to fulfill in our time. He commands. And to those who obey Him, whether they be wise or simple, He will reveal Himself in the toils, the conflicts, the sufferings which they shall pass through in His fellowship, and, as an ineffable mystery, they shall learn in their own experience Who He is" (Schweitzer: *Quest of the Hist. Jesus*, p. 401).

#### 4. *The Apostolic Age.*

Critical effort in the investigation of the Apostolic Age was even more belated than in the case of the Life of Christ. The two movements originated at near the same time, but progress was much more rapid in the study of the Life of Christ. The earliest literary product bearing specifically on the Apostolic Age was the *Introduction* by J. D. Michaelis in 1788. Semler had already made a definite contribution in the inauguration of the correct method, by showing the relation of apostolic life and teaching to its historical setting, but he left no work dealing at any length with the problems

of the Apostolic Age: Further advances were made by the *Introductions* of Eichhorn (1804-1812) and De Wette (1826). The honor of being the pioneer in a direct and thorough historical treatment of this period belongs to Neander, the great church historian, and author of an important *Life of Jesus*. His great work on the *History of the Planting and Training of the Christian Church by the Apostles* first appeared in 1832, and was translated into English in 1841. In view of the limited facilities at his command, it was a remarkable achievement, being commensurate with the great critical ability of that profound scholar. He addresses himself directly to the historical problems of the period, and deals with them in a thoroughly scientific manner. Had his work been used as a basis for further efforts, and had sober and sane critical methods continued the process, present day Christianity would be in a far better situation for a correct interpretation of this period. But his careful objective method was destined soon to be displaced by a crassly subjective process, which forced first century history to conform to certain subjective theories, based on a philosophical prepossession.

The scholar who inaugurated the critical revolution in the study of the Apostolic Age was F. C. Baur. He became a professor on the faculty of the Tuebingen University in 1826, at which post he spent the remainder of his life. His epoch-making works were one on Paul in 1845 (which really precipitated the reaction) and one on Christianity of the first three centuries in 1853. His work was of a positive value as a means of provoking NT scholarship to a rigidly exact scrutiny of the historical data of the first two hundred years. He became the founder of the famous "Tuebingen School," a name taken from the place at which Baur held his

official position, and applied to the group of scholars who accepted and promoted his critical opinions. (The distinguishing characteristic of his views was the "Tendency Theory," a subjective process based upon Hegelian philosophy, which represented the early disciples as arrayed on opposing sides of an intensely heated controversy, with Paul as the leader of the liberal faction and Peter of the conservatives.) Efforts were made in the second century to bring these two factions together. As a means in this syncretistic movement much of the NT literature was written. On the basis of this assumed philosophy of early Christian history Baur and his associates interpreted and dated all the books of the NT. His theory has never been widely received, and is nowhere accepted today, but the reaction which he created turned the energies of many scholars to a special study of the facts and tendencies of early Christian history.

The first reaction in favor of a more objective method of viewing the Apostolic Age was in Ritschl's *Origin of the Ancient Catholic Church*, which first appeared in 1850, with a second edition in 1857. The second edition was a fatal blow to the theories of the Tuebingen School, and did much toward retarding its influence. The better method was fully established by a work of K. H. Weizsacker in 1886, which is described by McGiffert as "the most influential of modern histories of the Apostolic age." The errors of Baur were now swept from the field, and opportunity made for a sane and thorough criticism, which could produce more satisfactory results. The greater part of the work has still been dominated by the liberal viewpoint, but the conservative position has made some very encouraging gains. Recent works on the history of the Apostolic Age have been produced by McGiffert (1897), Bartlet (1899),

Wernle (1901), Pfeiderer (1902-1905), Dobschutz (1906), Ropes (1906). Studies in the literature of the Apostolic Age, or NT *Introduction*, have been produced by H. J. Holtzmann (1885), Bernhard Weiss (1886), Juelicher (1894), Zahn (1897), Moffatt (1911), and a host of other scholars. Work in providing and investigating the sources of information has been extensively carried on by Harnack, Deissman, Ramsay, Kirsopp Lake, E. J. Goodspeed and others. The material is in hand and the field clearly defined, and the inviting task lies before NT scholarship of unfolding the entrancing history of this sacred and momentous period in the course of human events.





PART II.  
SOURCES



## CHAPTER VII.

### SIGNIFICANCE AND SCOPE.

The science of NT criticism seeks to discover, interpret and correlate all the facts bearing upon the origin and meaning of the NT. We have already considered the great importance of being sure that what we deal with is really *historical fact*, and not merely "critical" *opinion*. Many of the supposedly assured results of criticism are really built upon a very filmy foundation, when the actual objective data supporting them are examined. A few remote and obscure evidences can be gathered from the archives of the past, and expanded by inference and speculation until they are woven into a very imposing theory, which theory has as its chief support the genius of its author rather than the realities of history. The competent and honest critic will carefully sift his data in an effort to secure as far as possible that which can be relied upon as actual objective facts. To be equipped for such an undertaking one must have ready access to the facts. Hence, when we enter upon the pursuit of the science of NT criticism, it is imperative that we become acquainted with the sources from which the materials are to be gathered. These sources may be divided into three classes.

1. Christianity arose out of Judaism. It is neither possible nor desirable to deny this fact. The light thrown upon the genesis and significance of primitive Christian life by exploration of the history and literature of contemporaneous Judaism has been of incalculable

lable assistance to a proper understanding of the NT. But it is necessary that this relation be not forced into a false application, to serve the purposes of a prejudiced criticism. The only way to secure the ability to test the validity of conclusions offered in this field of study is to have first-hand acquaintance with the original sources upon which such conclusions claim to be based. This equipment requires a study of the *literature of Judaism*.

2. While the Christian religion found its historical genesis in Judaism, its activity was largely affected by conditions and conceptions of the pagan world in which it functioned. Typical apostolic Christianity, as it was molded under the overmastering influence of Paul, received largely its form and direction from elements of the Græco-Roman world. To rightly judge the extent and nature of these efforts we must know what existed in the pagan world of that period. Such knowledge is to be obtained from the records and indirect evidence of Græco-Roman life to be found in the literary remains of *first century paganism*.

3. Many features of apostolic Christianity may be best discerned by a careful study of its subsequent product. That is, Christianity of the following three centuries throws considerable light upon that of the first century. Particularly are we dependent upon these later centuries for our objective evidence of the literature produced in the Apostolic Age. We are therefore under the necessity of examining *early Christian literature*.

Thus we must carry our investigation into the Jewish, pagan, and Christian sources. The necessary limits of this book require that we devote to these vast fields of research but a very brief summary.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE LITERATURE OF JUDAISM.

We are dealing in this chapter with the literary activity of the Jewish people after the time of Ezra down to and including the second century of the Christian era. The literary products embraced by this period are generally referred to under the broad, general designation of "Jewish Literature." But the use of this title logically includes the NT along with other Jewish writings, for the NT was in the main composed by Jews, and exhibits the characteristic stamp of Jewish literary effort. Since in this discussion we desire to deal only with Jewish literature outside of the NT, it has become necessary to select a more accurate designation. The title *Literature of Judaism* exactly serves the purpose. It is accurate and appropriate for two reasons.

(1) This literature is the surviving expression of that type of life in the first and second centuries B. C. and A. D. universally accepted under the name "Judaism." To the student of this period this word connotes very definite ideas. It represents the character in both mind and conduct of that remnant of Israel which settled in Palestine after the Restoration, together with the immigrants colonized in Egypt by Alexander. It is possible to speak of "Mesopotamian Judaism," for in the period under consideration there were many thousands of Jews in that region, but used thus the term would be merely an accommodation, as the descendants of Jacob who inhabited the Mesopotamian valley were

likely quite different from those in Palestine and Egypt. It is true that there was likewise a great difference developed between the Jews in Palestine and those in Egypt, entirely justifying the distinguishing appellations Palestinian Judaism and Hellenistic Judaism, but genetically considered these two branches of the race present a common line of development. The distinctive character of Judaism received the main outline of its pattern from Ezra, and was well advanced in its progressive formation before Alexander deported the Jewish colonists to Alexandria. In consequence Alexandrian Judaism, until after the second century A. D., was deeply influenced by the traditions of the race preserved and defended in Palestine. This attitude seems to have been wanting in the Mesopotamian Jews. The chief reason, however, why we are not concerned with the Mesopotamian Jews is because we have not a single piece of literature produced by them.

(2) This term necessarily excludes the literature of the New Testament. It is true that some like to term Christianity "the higher Judaism," and in some respects the description is not inappropriate, but very early in its history Christianity experienced a complete disjunction from standard Judaism. Whatever may be one's view of the relation between Jesus and Paul, it would be scarcely denied that the New Testament is mainly characterized by the Pauline conception of the new religion, and Paul is certainly not to be regarded as a product of standard Judaism. Hence it is not possible for anyone to feel disposed to group the New Testament with the literature of Judaism. For these reasons we feel that we have a term which obviates any confusion as to its limits.

## I. A BRIEF SURVEY OF THE LITERATURE.

Here it is not possible to draw hard and fast lines. No piece of literature belongs exclusively to any one type. But, however many elements it may contain, we may find some one which is pre-eminent, and which enables us to classify the document with a particular type. By the use of this method we may divide the literature of Judaism into five types: *historical*, *historico-romantic*, *poetical*, *apocalyptic* and *gnomic*.

1. *Historical.*

(1) There is no Jewish literature which is wholly historical, but a few books are dominantly so. Doubtless the nearest approach to purely historical literature is to be found in *I Maccabees*. This book was written in Palestine about 125-100 B. C. Its original language was Hebrew, but it was soon translated into Greek, and became part of the Septuagint, through which it has been preserved. The author was a Palestinian Jew, but not an ardent legalist. His motive was very largely historical. The religious point of view is not that of the Old Testament. There is a striking lack of the Old Testament emphasis upon special divine intervention. While there is a clear religious interest, and an evident sense of God's relation with men, yet the author is plainly writing history. He is seeking to give the Jewish people an accurate account of their eventful and heroic struggle for national independence. It recites the military exploits of the Maccabean family in their struggle for independence from Syrian domination. The hero of the book is Judas Maccabeus, and the greater part of it is devoted to recounting his military successes. The introduction gives a survey of the Alex-



andrian kingdom, and of its division, and then deals with the causes of the Jewish revolt. Then follows an account of the beginning of the struggle under Mattathias, the father of the Maccabean brothers. Next there comes a record of the marvelous campaigns of Judas and the final liberation of Palestine. The closing chapters contain a narrative of the deeds and destinies of the successors of Judas.

(2) Quite different from this book is the book known as *II Maccabees*. It is not thus named because it is second in the sense of sequence, but because it contains another account of the same events. It was written in Greek about 75-50 B. C. by an Alexandrian Jew, for the purpose of exalting Judaism. While the material used is historical, yet the religious purpose of the author is clearly dominant. The progress running through the book is one of religious feeling rather than historical purpose. There is a marked note of Jewish piety, and a strong emphasis upon religious devotion and legalism. Chronological disorder and crass supernaturalism are distinguishing qualities of the narrative. While it covers very much the same period as I Maccabees, its historical value is not to be compared with that book. But neither is it to be regarded as historically worthless. There is undoubtedly a basis of fact embedded in its account of the Maccabean struggle. It begins with two letters which Schurer thinks were attached after it was written, and by hands other than the author's. The book begins with the reign of Seleucus IV, one year earlier than the beginning of I Maccabees. The first event related is the desecration of the temple by one of the ministers of Seleucus. Then follows an account of the persecutions by Antiochus Epiphanes, leading to the Maccabean re-

volt, the account closing with the victory of Judas over Nicanor, 160-161 B. C. The author himself tells us that his work is an epitome of an earlier work of five volumes by Jason of Cyrene. The original work by Jason has perished, and what we have here is a condensation of the larger work, revised to suit the apologetic interests of its author. On the whole we may say of II Maccabees that it is a book of some value and considerable interest.

(3) Somewhere between the two extremes represented by I and II Maccabees we may place the works of *Josephus*. This Jewish historian was born about 37 or 38 A. D. at Jerusalem. While Paul was in Jerusalem for the purpose of conferring with Peter, Josephus was an infant in a Jerusalem home. He was of priestly lineage, and educated for a priest. His original Jewish name was Joseph, which he later Latinized by adding the ending *us*, and taking the surname Flavius. According to his own account, he visited Rome at the age of twenty-six in an effort to obtain liberty for some of his fellow-countrymen. When he was about thirty or thirty-one years of age there broke out in Palestine the last Jewish struggle for national independence, culminating in the destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70. Josephus took an active part in this uprising, but with no very zealous spirit, because he was sympathetic toward Rome, and doubted the wisdom of the revolt. He was placed in charge of the forces in Galilee, but recognizing his inability to offer successful resistance, he capitulated at the first approach of the Romans. He was taken captive and became a prisoner of war, but was treated with unusual favor because of his manifest sympathy with the Roman cause. After the fall of

Jerusalem he became a resident and citizen of Rome, and devoted the remainder of his life to literary activity. His work was of a general historical character, but Josephus was essentially an apologist, and not a historian. His writing was in Greek, the command of which he must have obtained after he took up residence in Rome. His first work was on the Jewish war for independence from Rome, and bore simply the title "The War." It was likely first written for the Jews of the far east, where a million or more were living in the Mesopotamian valley. This first edition was written in Aramaic. Later he rewrote and enlarged the same work, writing it the second time in Greek. It was most likely written about 80 A. D. Without question the most important literary product of Josephus was his "Antiquities," written at Rome about 90-93 A. D. To the production of this book he devoted many years of careful effort, and it stands as his greatest work. It is an account of Jewish history from the beginning down to his own time. The book falls naturally into three parts. In the first part he follows the Old Testament story, and simply narrates in popular language and style the events recorded there. The second division covers the interbiblical period, where his sources were various, but not so trustworthy. The last part is an account of the Jews of his own age, and of the war with Rome. The historical reliability of this work is open to grave question due to the untrustworthiness of many of his sources and his own strong apologetic interests, but it is nevertheless an important source of historical data. Two other works of Josephus need but bare mention. "Against Apion" is a defense of Judaism against the unjust and often untrue attacks of a blind anti-Semitism.

“Life” is a not altogether modest account of his own career. He died at Rome about 95-98 A. D., being over sixty years of age.

## 2. *Historico-Romantic.*

Prof. Clyde W. Votaw of the University of Chicago calls this type “Didactic Romance.” Schurer, in his *Jewish People in the Time of Christ*, describes it as “Hortatory Narrative.” The matter of designation is really not of special importance. The character of the literature is quite clearly distinguished. Schurer describes it thus: “Stories of a purely fictitious character were composed, which the author no doubt intended to be regarded as founded on fact, though at the same time the object in view was not so much to impart historical information, as to use these stories as vehicles for conveying moral and religious lessons and exhortations. From the incidents narrated—and which are taken from the history of the Jewish people, or from the life of certain individuals—the readers are expected to learn the truth that the fear of God is after all the highest wisdom, for God always delivers His children in some wonderful way in the end, although for a little He may bring them into circumstances of trouble and danger” (*Jewish People*, II, III, 32). It is hortatory romance, purporting to be based upon historical events.

(1) The most of this type of literature seems to have been produced in Egypt. Only one of any importance was produced in Palestine. This was the book of *Judith*, a Hebrew document, written about 200 B. C. It represents ardent national Judaism, being particularistic and legal. The viewpoint of the book is Pharisaic; its method is that of Old Testament history; its purpose

was to edify and encourage the people in a time of great trial and persecution, to the end that they might offer brave resistance to the enemies of Jewish religion and liberty. It was likely written during the persecution by Antiochus Epiphanes, and before the Maccabean revolt. The title of the book is the name of the heroine of the story. The name means "Jewess," and the heroine of the book is probably intended to portray typically Jewish patriotism and devotion. The book divides itself naturally into two parts. Chapters I to VII serve as an introduction, and give an account of the military situation which occasioned Judith's deed. Chapters VIII to XVI give the story of Judith and tell of her strategy to save her people. The historical setting is a supposed campaign of Nebuchadnezzar, "king of Nineveh." Because the western nations of his empire failed to aid him in a military expedition, he sends one of his generals, Holofernes, with a large army to punish them. The Jews, in order to protect Jerusalem and the Temple, fortify some of their mountain towns. One of these towns, named Bethulia, is attacked and besieged. The elders in fear obtain the consent of the people to sue for capitulation, but Judith, a rich widow of the town, asks for the privilege of making an effort to save her people. Attiring herself in her most beautiful garments she goes forth to the camp of the enemy. Holofernes is totally captivated by her beauty, is deceived into believing that her purpose is to betray her townsmen to their enemies, and orders a great banquet spread in her honor. Being left alone in the quarters of the drunken leader, she cuts off his head and returns to the town with it. The army is then easily routed and Bethulia, with all Palestine, is saved. It is likely that the book of Judith was read at the celebration of one of the Maccabean feasts,



either Dedication or Nicanor's Day. So perhaps also I Maccabees and Esther.

(2) The other three books included in this class were all written in Egypt. Their original language was the Koine Greek. The earliest was the book of *Tobit*, which was written about 225 B. C. if not earlier. This is most probably the oldest extant piece of Jewish literature produced in Egypt. Some even think that the original language was Aramaic, and this is possibly true, though if it was written as late as 225 the original language was probably Greek. It represents a high type of Jewish ethics and religion. It was written for Jews of the Dispersion. Likely the specific purpose inspiring its production was to counteract the influence of a certain piece of heathen literature known as the "Tractate of Kohns." This was an Egyptian writing, composed in the interest of Egyptian religion. It tells of a princess, possessed of a demon, which Kohns, the Egyptian god, expels and heals the princess. This story was likely gaining a hold upon the religious imagination of some of the Jews of Egypt, and *Tobit* was written as a rival tractate. For this reason we find in it a strain of Oriental superstition. The title of the book is the name of the hero of the story. It is written in the form of an autobiography. The story is located several centuries before the time of writing, the plot being laid in Babylonia. *Tobit*, with Ana his wife and their son *Tobias*, is dwelling near Nineveh. *Raguel*, a kinswoman of *Tobit*, lives with her daughter *Sarah* in Media. In an effort to perform a benevolent deed *Tobit* loses the sight of both eyes. Realizing that the end of his active life is rapidly drawing to a close he sends his son *Tobias* to get ten talents which some years before he has left in

Rages of Media. Tobias' companion of this journey is the angel Raphael. Arriving at Ecbatana, the home of Raguel, Tobias meets Sarah, whom her mother offers to him in marriage. Sarah had already had seven husbands, all of whom were killed by a jealous demon immediately after marriage to her. By means of a plan suggested to him by Raphael, Tobias succeeds in eluding the demon, rescues Sarah and returns to his father. Meanwhile Raphael has journeyed on to Rages and secured the treasure left there by Tobit. Through another suggestion of the angel, Tobias restores sight to his father. Tobit offers a song of gratitude to Raphael as he departs. Thus closes one of the most fascinating pieces of Jewish literature, a story which was exceedingly popular in the early centuries among both Jews and Christians, and was included as a part of the Alexandrian canon.

(3) Another book in this group which is intensely Jewish, though written outside of Palestine, is the book known as *III Maccabees*. The title has been superficially attached. It is a misnomer, there being no connection between the book and the Maccabean struggle. The title is quite probably not original but arose from the association of this writing with the other Maccabean books in a common manuscript. Its grouping with these books probably resulted from the fact that they are all concerned with problems of persecution and deliverance. There is very little in *III Maccabees* which can be regarded as historical. It is, however, quite likely based upon a genuine historical occurrence. It is a Jewish apology in the form of historical romance. It is set in the third century B. C., in the reign of Ptolemy IV of Egypt. According to the story, after



the success of his battle against Antiochus at Raphia, the Egyptian king came back to Jerusalem and attempted to defile the Temple. Being miraculously frustrated in this attempt he returned to Egypt and planned to wreak vengeance on the Jews of his own country. He first sought revenge by interfering with their religious and civil status. Finally, in desperation and rage, he ordered the Jews of Egypt assembled in Alexandria, and that drunken elephants be released among them. But when the order was carried out the elephants turned upon the Egyptians and the Jews escaped. As a result of this miracle of deliverance the King was converted to the worship of Jehovah and the Jews arose to a higher position in the realm than they had ever attained before. This interesting story, having probably some historical basis, was composed in Greek by an Alexandrian Jew about 125 B. C. It is a weak book, and the style is very figurative. It has little moral, religious or historical value.

(4) The nearest approach to the Greek point of view to be found in this type is the so-called *Letter of Aristeas*, written in Egypt about 100 B. C. In this book the strong Hellenizing tendency of Alexandrian Judaism is clearly evident. It gives the account of the origin of the Septuagint. The document is not, strictly speaking, historical. There might have been in the mind of the writer some intention to give or preserve an account of the translation of the Septuagint, but this appears to have been a secondary motive. His chief motive seems to have been to place before the Gentile reader a fusion of the religious and moral teachings of Judaism with the life and philosophy of Hellenism. The author purports to be a Gentile, but is really a Jew

praising Judaism and commending it to the Gentiles. Its chief value for us is the light which it throws on the history of the Septuagint.

### 3. *Poetical.*

This period was not especially characterized by psalm writing, but, nevertheless, some of the best psalms to be found in Hebrew poetry were produced out of the struggle and heartache of these years.

(1) A few psalms contained in the canonical Psalter were quite probably written during the Maccabean conflict, and are called *Maccabean Psalms*. As far back as Theodore of Mopsuestia it was suggested that there might be Maccabean psalms in the canon of the Old Testament. Theodore suggested the seventeenth as a possibility. Calvin regarded a few of the psalms as Maccabean. This belief has continued to grow and finds enlarging support among scholars until there is no longer much question whether there are Maccabean psalms in the Psalter, but how many there are and which. Some think there are many, while others think there are but few. There is a pretty general consensus of opinion on four: 44, 74, 79, 83. Several scholars are inclined to add 110 and 149. One could never be dogmatic about this matter, for it is exceedingly difficult to determine the date of a psalm. There are but very slight marks of its period and historical background, for the liturgical use made of them tended to remove the specific and to generalize and conventionalize them. Hence, there may be many more belonging to the Maccabean period than we suspect. It is practically certain that the Hagiographa of the Hebrew canon—to which the Psalms belonged—was not closed until after the Macca-

bean period, and consequently Maccabean psalms could have been included, though no one can be certain that they were.

(2) There is no doubt one group of psalms belonging to this period. These are the pseudonymous *Psalms of Solomon*. There are eighteen of these psalms in all. The seventeenth is the one of the greatest interest to the New Testament student because of its distinct Messianic element. The standpoint of these psalms is strict Pharisaic Judaism. They are intensely nationalistic, but pervaded by an earnest moral tone and sincere piety. The righteous of Israel are constantly held up in contrast with the nations of the world. Those who are indifferent to the laws and customs of Judaism are called "sinners." Those who are in line with traditional orthodoxy are the "righteous." Their purpose was to condemn and correct liberal and political Judaism, and to check the growing tendency toward Hellenism. It is clear that they sprang up in a time when some family not of the house of David had been occupying the throne. There had been great sin, and a falling away from the traditions of Israel. This description fits best the time of the Asmonaeon dynasty (105-63 B. C.). The second psalm seems to be quite clearly an imprecation against Pompey. He is the man "from a strange land" who comes against Jerusalem and is welcomed by the "sinners." When he enters the city he desecrates the Temple and oppresses the people, but is finally himself overthrown and dies on the shores of Egypt. This description so accurately fits Pompey that there can be little doubt that he is the one in mind. It seems that some of the psalms were written much later than Pompey's time. It is probable that their dates range from

63-48 B. C. Their original language was Hebrew, and the place of composition Palestine. They are of interest to New Testament study as portraying important elements of the Messianic hope of Judaism.

#### 4. *Apocalyptic.*

We approach here the most distinctive literature produced by Judaism. Judaism was characterized by an intense Messianism, and it was thought that the Messianic age would usher in the end of the world; hence the abundance of apocalyptic writings. The term "apocalyptic" is a transliteration of a Greek word made up from two other words, one meaning "from" and the other meaning "to cover," hence, to take the cover from, to disclose, to reveal. The Jews had no such word in their language. For this sort of literature they used the word prophecy. Apocalyptic represents the predictive element in prophecy. This predictive work of the Jews was occasioned by a desire to know the future. They wished to know the future because the present seemed to them wholly unsatisfactory, even sometimes unbearable, and they believed it was God's purpose in some way to remedy conditions. In this apocalyptic literature the highest idealism and hope of Judaism is expressed. They represent a noble effort and deserve our deepest appreciation.

This period was particularly adapted to apocalyptic, because apocalyptic is a literature of persecution. When political powers oppressed, and those within Judaism apostatized, when the dearest object in the possession of the devout Jew—his religion—was critically jeopardized, then he instinctively turned to God and the future for hope. The superb faith of Judaism, when borne down by tyranny and persecution, renounced the

present order, and escaped from its fetters by soaring high on the wings of hope into another world order, wherein God and righteousness would reign supreme.

Apocalyptic literature was thoroughly futuristic in its point of view; hence the peculiar style was that of vision. But it must always be borne in mind that the vision was a figure of certain great issues and ideas related to the situation which was present and real to the apocalypticist. The pathetic heart-throb of Jewish hope in the midst of trial and persecution found its most satisfying expression in the form of apocalyptic writings. This Jewish apocalypticism formed its earliest models in Ezekiel and Daniel, and its noble and enduring culmination in the New Testament Apocalypse.

(1) The literature of Judaism contained four of these apocalyptic documents of particular interest. The greatest one, both in length and breadth of its prophetic horizon, is the book now generally known as *I Enoch*. The work is likely composite, produced by piecing together five smaller apocalypses, and has but little unity. The dates of these five documents range from 200 to 64 B. C. The work clearly took its title from the Old Testament patriarch of that name. There was a vast amount of such Enoch literature. We have here five such documents, and in the composite work known as *II Enoch* there is another collection. Because of the description of Enoch in Gen. 5:24 he was supposed to have had the privilege of special knowledge of the heavenly categories. It was this idea of the patriarch having been conversant with the secrets of God that led to the production of the abundance of Enoch literature. *I Enoch* was composed in Palestine, and its original language was Hebrew or Aramaic, or possibly both.

The book may be analyzed into three main divisions, and the divisions into several sections each. The first division is chapters 1-36. It is pre-Maccabean in date, and Schurer regards it as the original basis of the whole work. Section one, chapters 1-5, depicts the future lot of the righteous and the wicked. Charles thinks this section is an editorial to the whole collection. His hypothesis is quite plausible, and deserves consideration. Section two, chapters 6-11, which Charles thinks is a Noah fragment, deals with the fall of the angels. Section three, chapters 12-16, is a dream vision in which Enoch is commissioned to announce divine judgment on the angels, and by them is entreated to intercede in their behalf. He complies with their request, but without success. Chapter 14 presents a typical Jewish picture of heaven. Section four, chapters 17-29, gives Enoch's first journey through the earth and Sheol. Section five, chapters 30-36, is an account of his second journey, and gives a description of heaven and hell, with a vision of the throne of God and of the Messianic Kingdom. The line of thought throughout these thirty-six chapters is this: the author is seeking to justify the ways of God in His dealings with men. The righteous shall not always suffer, and the wicked shall not always prosper, but ultimately the wicked are to be destroyed, and the earth renewed as the peaceful abode of the righteous.

The second, and most important division, includes chapters 37-71. It contains three allegories, or similitudes. The first, chapters 27-44, gives an insight into the secret mysteries of the heavenly abodes. The second, chapters 45-57, deals with the Messiah, calling Him the Son of Man, and discussing His nature and mission, a mission of judgment and kingdom building. The



third, chapters 58-71, deals further with the issues of blessedness for the righteous and judgment for the wicked.

The third division is composed of chapters 72-82. This is in two sections. Section one, chapters 72-79, is of scientific import, unfolding the secrets of the celestial bodies, as taught to Enoch by the angel who has these matters in charge. Section two, chapters 80-82, is of ethical import, setting forth the punishment of the wicked and the triumph of the righteous.

The fourth division of the book embraces chapters 83-90. Here we have two dreams of Enoch, one about the deluge, and the other giving an allegorical picture of the world's history down to the time of the author, in figures drawn from the animal creation.

The fifth division, chapters 91-104, contains two sections. Section one, chapters 91-92, deals with a representation of the course of events under the figures of ten successive weeks, seven dealing with the past and three looking toward the future. Section two, chapters 94-104, contains a message of exhortation and hope for the righteous and inevitable woe for the sinner.

The closing division of the book, chapters 105-108, is made up of fragments, the chief being a Noah fragment covering most of chapters 106 and 107.

(2) The only apocalyptic production of importance outside of Palestine was *II Enoch*, also known as the "Slavonic Enoch," because of the language in which we find the only extant copy, and the "Book of the Secrets of Enoch." This document is a comparatively recent discovery, having been first brought to public notice in 1892. The honor belongs to R. H. Charles, the greatest living scholar in Jewish literature, of first



investigating and giving to the public the real nature and value of this apocalypse, the last half being of gnostic or wisdom type, which probably originated in Palestine. The apocalyptic portion was apparently not written under the stress of persecution, as was usually the case with apocalyptic writings, but is a calm exposition of current Jewish apocalyptic ideals. It was likely composed by an Alexandrian Jew, about 50 A. D., for the purpose of acquainting his kinsmen in Egypt with the apocalyptic ideas of standard Judaism.

(3) The third apocalypse deserving of notice was written (or compiled) in Palestine by an ardent Pharisee. It is known as *II Baruch*, and purports to be a writing of Baruch, the friend of Jeremiah, relating what he did before and after the destruction of Jerusalem. The contents of the book consist of seven sections, distinctly marked off by intervals of fasting. The first three sections seek to show God's reason for permitting the overthrow of Jerusalem; the next three are composed of visions setting forth God's sure judgment upon the enemies of Israel, the resurrection and future destinies; the last consists of addresses and epistles of Baruch to Israel. The religious standpoint is standard Judaism of the first century A. D. The work was written contemporaneously with the rise of the Christian movement. Charles thinks that it was a polemic against Christianity, but there is little, if any, evidence for this view. The work is clearly an apology for Judaism. It is an effort to explain the disaster which befell the Jews in the destruction of Jerusalem. It was written in Palestine about 80 A. D. in Hebrew (or Aramaic).

(4) The apocalypse known as *IV Ezra* was written in Palestine about A. D. 90. The book bears this title

because purported to have been written by the ancient Hebrew scribe of that name. There is, however, no great emphasis upon this pseudepigraphic feature of the book, as the name occurs only three times. The book is made up of seven visions, all of them devoted to an effort to explain the fall of Jerusalem. It is concerned with the same general theme which occupies II Baruch, but approaches the problem in a far different attitude. In II Baruch we find a viewpoint of satisfied, standard Judaism; but this book is in a sense a criticism of standard Judaism, especially as to the doctrine that only a few are saved, and that God is entirely satisfied that there should only be a few. This last was the standard Jewish view, but to the author of this book it is not satisfactory. He earnestly seeks for a different but better view, finally falling back upon the standard Jewish eschatology of his day for an explanation. He takes the view that the trials of Israel are disciplinary and preparatory in their purpose. He also resorts to the argument that the ways of God are beyond human understanding.

#### 5. *Gnomic.*

This literature is also called "Wisdom literature." It is of that general type presented by the canonical book of Proverbs. While apocalyptic dealt with the theoretical and eschatological, wisdom dealt with the practical and ethical. This gnomic literature represents Jewish moral philosophy at its best. It was written for the guidance of the people in their everyday lives. "It was a product of reflection upon the experiences of human life." This wisdom activity was not only literary, but was also carried on in personal instruction. What we have, preserved in writing, is the best ideas produced

by that phase of Jewish activity. It was one of the most important phases of Jewish life, and produced the most extensive literature. Five representatives of this literature may be considered here.

(1) The oldest book in this group is known as *Sirach*, or *Sira*. What its original title was we cannot be certain, for it is extant in Hebrew only in fragments, all of which are defective in the opening verses. In the Greek MSS it is called "The Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach." The title "Ecclesiasticus" has been in use in the Latin church since the middle of the third century. This title is ill chosen. It means church book, and this book is not such in any peculiar sense. Nevertheless, it was the title which the book carried in the Vulgate, and has survived to modern times. The simple name *Sira* seems to be the preferable title. As is true of all books in this class, the contents are miscellaneous, and lack systematic arrangement. This absence of logical sequence in these books is not to be regarded as disorder, but as the wisdom method. The typical Jewish mind was not analytical and logical, but practical and concrete. Such is the character of this book. It offers a manual of conduct, similar to the canonical book of Proverbs. The author wished by it to promote higher living. He studied human experience and sought to point the way to a better life. The book was written about 190-170 B. C. in Hebrew, probably at Jerusalem. Its teachings are in line with orthodox Judaism.

(2) In this group belongs the book known as the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*. The title is derived from the historical setting of the story. The book purports to be the testaments of the twelve sons of Ja-

cob, given to their sons at their deathbeds. There are twelve sections, one devoted to each of the twelve patriarchs. The pseudepigraphic character of the book was not intended as a deception, but as a matter of literary form. The story is not told from historical motives, but as a medium of teaching. It belongs to that literary form known among the Jews as Haggadha. The original language was Hebrew, and it was written during the years of John Hyrcanus, c. 109-106 B. C. The author was a loyal Pharisee and an ardent admirer of the Maccabean family. Each testament presents three distinct parts: (1) The patriarch gives a sketch of his own life history, confessing the wrongs he has done and calling attention to his virtues. (2) The patriarch then offers his sons an earnest word of exhortation. (3) Each testament closes with a sort of apocalyptic message, setting forth the redemption of Israel as mediated through the tribes of Levi and Judah. The chief interest of the book is in its ethical teachings and their parallelism to the New Testament.

(3) This wisdom activity also extends to Egypt. The earliest work of the gnostic type in this region was the *Wisdom of Solomon*, also known as the "Book of Wisdom," or just "Wisdom." It is unquestionably pseudepigraphic, though many Catholic scholars have tried to defend its Solomonic authorship. It was written in Alexandria between 100 and 50 B. C. The original language was of course Greek. Its theology shows clearly the traces of Greek philosophy. The contents fall into three natural divisions. Chapters 1-6 contain an eschatological discourse, aimed against a doctrine which denied the immortality of the soul, and the final judgment. Chapters 7-10 are a panegyric on wisdom

delineating it as the highest creation of God and the most valuable asset of man. This passage is thought by some critics to have exerted considerable influence over Paul, but the theory has but slight foundation. Chapters 11-19 present the glorification of Israel, and contrast God's favor toward them and their worship of God with the folly of heathen idolatry. It is a speculative religious discussion of eschatology and wisdom, treating wisdom in an abstract sense, characteristic of Greek philosophy rather than of Jewish gnomic literature. It is a book of philosophical theology instead of practical ethics.

(4) A second Alexandrian product of this type is *IV Maccabees*. The book bears this title because it is built upon the story of the Maccabean martyrs. It is wisdom teaching presented in the form of a highly rhetorical public address, after the manner of Greek philosophical speech-making. It is a synagogue sermon or anniversary address of some sort. The language is good idiomatic Greek of a literary style. It was written in Alexandria 1-25 A. D. by an unknown author.

(5) To this class of literature belongs the work of *Philo*, the greatest individual produced by Judaism as such. He was born in Alexandria about 20 B. C., and died there about 50 A. D. Thus his life traversed the entire period of the life of Jesus, and much of that of Paul. In view of this fact it is a little strange that Philo gives no indication anywhere of any contact or acquaintance with Christianity. We know but little of his life. He apparently lived a very simple life, never having become a public figure. His family was very prominent in the Jewish life of Alexandria, his brother being ethnarch of the Jewish colony, holding this office

under the Roman government. Philo was the most energetic and voluminous writer in all the history of the Jews. He represents the acme of Hellenized Judaism. His style, terminology, and mode of thought are Greek. He was nevertheless loyal to Moses and the traditions of Israel. His supreme effort was to interpret standard Judaism in the terms and thought forms of Greek philosophy current in his day.

## II. RELATION OF THIS LITERATURE TO THE NEW TESTAMENT.

1. *It reveals God's development of the religious experience of the Jews in preparation for Christianity.* We are not to think that God departed from Israel after the death of Ezra, and did not return until the angel accosted Zacharias in the Temple at the hour of sacrifice. Though no writings were produced in this period which we may accept as inspired scripture, yet God was still working in the experience of the people. He was developing the Messianic hope, teaching them a deeper appreciation of the O. T. scriptures, familiarizing them with ideas which could become means or vehicles for the teachings of Jesus, and broadening their conception of His universal sovereignty over mankind. It was in this period that the prophets of the Old Testament were accorded their rightful place in the affections and thought of the people. When they spoke, their messages were little understood or appreciated. In the period between the Testaments these prophets came into their own. The great bulk of the literary effort of Judaism was copied after the pattern found in the prophets. God's great promise doctrine, so clearly set forth in the O. T., did not take large hold upon Israel until in the last two hundred years before Christ. The literature



of this period exhibits the appreciation of this doctrine. Thus when Jesus came there was a remnant of Israel ready to hear and receive him.

2. *It exhibits the religious heritage into which Jesus came as a Jew.* We must not forget that Jesus was human as truly as he was divine, and in his human nature he was a Jew, a real and typical child of Judaism, and shared the normal heritage of any other child of his day. His thought processes, while the implements of his divine nature and authority, nevertheless had their normal relation to the current thinking of his day. Jesus was not the mere product of his own age. He transcended his age, but he did not lack a normal connection with his age. His human relationships were as complete as his divine relationships, save that he had no sin. Hence he came into the intellectual and religious heritage of Judaism as any normal child would do. This heritage we find reflected in the literature before us. Hence it need give us no shock to find in this literature some of the very ideas and modes of expression which are represented by the teachings of Jesus. These elements of his teaching were the normal results of his synagogue training.

3. *It enables us to understand the character of the people among whom Christianity arose.* We can understand Jesus better, and better interpret his teachings, when we thoroughly appreciate the life in the midst of which he moved. Many forces and tendencies were working upon the hearts of the people to whom he brought his message, and we can better apprehend that message when we know what it was intended to counteract or sanction.



4. *It furnished ideas and terminology to be used by Jesus and his apostles in formulating the Christian message.* When Jesus and the apostles approached the world with their message of redemption, they used the good judgment to put it in words and forms of expression which the people could understand. They presented the truth by means of terms and ideas with which the people were already familiar. This language and these conceptions God was making ready in the interbiblical period, as we discover from a study of this literature. Thus it may be seen that a thorough knowledge of the literature of Judaism is of immense advantage in interpreting the NT.

We may note by way of illustration a few striking parallels of thought and language between the NT and Jewish literature.

JAS. 1:13 f. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted of evil, and he himself tempteth no man.

ROM. 9:19-20. For who withstandeth his will? . . . shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why didst thou make me thus?

EPH. 6:13ff. Wherefore take up the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand in the evil day. . . . Stand therefore having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness. . . . withal taking up the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God. (vs. 11). That ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

SIRA 15:11f. Say not thou: It is through the Lord that I fell away. . . . Say not thou, It is he that caused me to err.

WISDOM 12:12. For who shall say, Why didst thou make it? or, Who shall understand thy judgment?

WISDOM 5:17. He shall take his jealousy as complete armor, and shall make the whole creation his weapons for vengeance on his enemies; he shall put on righteousness as a breastplate, and shall take judgment unfeigned as a helmet; he shall take holiness as an invincible shield, and shall sharpen stern wrath for a sword; and the world shall go forth with him to fight against his insensate foes.

The parables of Jesus were not an unfamiliar form of teaching, but a method employed in both oral and written instruction. Most of his other teachings are

set in the wisdom, or gnostic form, so widely used by the rabbis of His day. His favorite descriptive term in reference to Himself—the Son of Man—is to be found in this literature. The beatitudes presented a familiar form, of which we may take an example from *Sira* 25:8-9: “Blessed is the husband of an understanding wife. . . . Blessed is he that hath not slipped with his tongue. . . . Blessed is the man that hath found a true friend.” These obvious parallels show that there is a connection between Christianity of the first century and current Judaism, but they also make it just as clear that Christianity took up the thought and language of Judaism and wrought it into a state of religion and ethics which far transcended all that Judaism had ever been able to produce. These ideas and terms were but God’s provision for the more effective advancement of the Kingdom of His son.

## CHAPTER IX

### FIRST CENTURY PAGANISM.

It has already been suggested that the new science of comparative religions has thrust into the foreground the problem of the relation of Christianity to the pagan religions in the midst of which it arose. Scholars had already been studying much the reaction of Christianity upon the world around it. That there exists a relation here no one now would care to question, but to judge accurately as to what this relation is we need to get all the facts of first century paganism before us in their true light. It is an easy matter to distort these facts by a fanciful interpretation of them, and make to appear a relation between paganism and Christianity which is wholly or practically invented. To rightly appraise these relationships, and get a correct view of the facts, one needs to see these facts as presented in the literary sources. These sources present four different classes. They are the Greek philosophers; the Greek and Latin historians; the Latin poets and essayists; and the inscriptions, papyri, and fragments. We can take here but a brief glance at these sources, mentioning only a few of the most prominent representatives of each class.

1. *The Greek Philosophers.* From this we may learn the characteristics of the thought life to which the New Testament appealed. Each age has its dominant minds which lead the intellectual activity, and mold the thought forms for their contemporaries. Thus

by studying the philosophy of those minds which were pre-eminent in influence in the first century we may approximately determine the general intellectual trend of the time. Comparing this with the development of the Christian religion, and its system of doctrine, we may discern to what extent Christianity has been affected by current philosophical views. In this process we do not necessarily deal with the thinkers who were themselves living in the first century, but those whose philosophy exercised a dominant influence in that day. The idea of God prevalent in Hellenistic thought of the first century owed much of its content to the Greek philosophers Anaxagoras (500-428 B. C.) and Heraclitus (535-475 B. C.) The dominant influence in the philosophy of the century in which Christianity arose was Plato, who died in 347 B. C. It was he who organized and made effective the philosophy of the great Socrates (died 399 B. C.). His philosophical views are in that group of his works known as "Dialogues." Regarded by some as greater than his master, was Plato's favorite disciple, Aristotle (384-322 B. C.). Doubtless Aristotle was indeed a greater philosopher than Plato, for his methods of thought and research were more scientific than those of his master, but Plato retained, and still retains, the greater influence in the currents of philosophical history. A third prominent figure in first century philosophy was Zeno (350-258 B. C.). He was the founder of the school of philosophers known as Stoics, a very influential factor in the thought life of Paul's day. Only a few fragments of his works are extant. The fullest and worthiest exponent of his views was Epictetus (A. D. 50-94), who was a Roman slave in early life, but was granted liberty and became a philosopher. Epicurus (342-270 B. C.), a contemporary

of Zeno, was founder of a school of philosophy at the other extreme from Stoicism, known as Epicureanism. We still have considerable fragments of his writings. The conflict of Christianity with some of the ideas embraced in his philosophy is reflected in the Pastoral Epistles and the Johannine writings. Some of the more or less harmonious elements of both Stoicism and Epicureanism were combined in the eclectic philosophy of the Alexandrian School, of which Philo, the great Jewish philosopher, is the representative of chief concern to the student of the New Testament. This long line of philosophers, extending from Anaxagoras (born 500 B. C.) to Philo (died c. 50 A. D.), a period of five centuries' length, constructed the thought world in which primitive Christianity was formed. It is of imperative necessity that the student of the NT should have some degree of familiarity with these intellectual factors, which inevitably affected in some way the doctrinal content of the NT. Just what effects there were is the vitally important question for consideration.

2. *The Greek and Latin Historians.* From these we get the political and social picture of first century life, and the conditions of previous years which contributed to the formation of first century life. They give to us the larger outlines of the world in which Christianity originated. From them we learn the general progress of events which constitutes that history of which the NT is a part. The first name in this group, chronologically considered, was Polybius (204-122 B. C.), who wrote exclusively of political history previous to his day. The other Greek name belonging to the group is that of Plutarch (46-117 A. D.), who was renowned as a biographer. The Latin authors of importance in

this group were Sallust (86-34 B. C.), Livy (59 B. C.-17 A. D.), and Tacitus (55-117 A. D.). One of the important sources for the Jewish history leading up to the NT is Josephus, whose work has been discussed above. The list is not complete without the mention of the great Christian historian Eusebius (260-340 A. D.), bishop of Caesarea, whose works throw light of incalculable value upon the historical setting of the NT. From these sources the NT critic learns the general character of the age with which he is dealing.

3. *Latin Poets, Essayists, etc.* From these authors we get most valuable evidence bearing upon the social and personal life of the day, including much of the religious condition of the times. Sometimes the picture is purposely drawn by the writer, more often incidentally reflected. From this fund of literature the practical everyday life of the first century may be understood. The more important names in this group are Plautus (254-184 B. C.), Cicero (106-43 B. C.), Virgil (70-19 B. C.), Horace (65-8 B. C.), Ovid (43 B. C.-18 A. D.), Seneca (3 B. C.-60 A. D.), Pliny (61-115 A. D.), and Juvenal (born 55 A. D.).

4. *Inscriptions, Papyri, and Fragments.* These sources have only recently come to the attention of scholars. Within the past century much interest has been aroused in the discovery and investigation of these important evidences of ancient life. In their bearing upon the NT they are important mainly for the light which they throw upon the original language. But they are also of value as exhibiting the features of the religious life. It is mainly from this material that we get most of our knowledge of the mystery religions of

the first century, concerning which there has been for the past thirty years much controversy in the realm of NT study. The fact that the sources of information relative to these mystery religions are so scant makes it exceedingly precarious to draw elaborate conclusions as to the effect of this phase of first century life upon Christianity. Many of the theories advanced by critics in explaining the dependence of Paul's theology upon the oriental conceptions of these religions are composed far more largely of their own speculative assumptions than the actual historical data furnished by a truly scientific investigation.





## CHAPTER X

### EARLY CHRISTIAN LITERATURE.

Here we consider the literature outside the NT written within the first four hundred years of Christian history. It is the chief source from which we derive our knowledge of how the NT books were regarded and to whom they were ascribed. It is also important as showing how the NT functioned in the life of the early Christian centuries; the thought and ideals which it produced. As to the dependability of these sources of information, we may safely accept the verdict of Harnack, who has worked as extensively in this literature as any single modern scholar. He says, in his book on *Chronology of Ancient Christian Literature*, "There was a time in which people felt obliged to regard the oldest Christian literature as a tissue of deceptions and falsifications. That time is past. For science it was an episode in which she learned much, and after which she has much to forget. . . . The oldest literature of the church is, in the main points, and in most of its details, from the point of view of literary history, veracious and trustworthy" (cit. in Hayes, *John and His Writings*, p. 142). The expression of this opinion in such emphatic terms by one of Harnack's standing and ability should give us great assurance as we enter this field.

#### I. A BRIEF SURVEY OF EARLY CHRISTIAN LITERATURE.

This literature presents three successive types, which are fairly distinct. First, there is a practical and hortatory type, coming immediately after the Apostolic Age, and produced by writers who are known as the *Apos-*

*tolie Fathers*, so denominated because they are supposed to have had personal knowledge of the apostles themselves. Next, we have the literature written in defence of Christianity against its pagan opponents, the authors of which were called *Apologists*. Finally there appears a type of literature produced by writers whose chief interest was the promotion of the views and influence of the ancient Catholic Church. These we may call the *Ecclesiastical Writers*. We have then three groups of writers before us for consideration.

### 1. *The Apostolic Fathers.*

Under this head we treat the hortatory literature, written by men who lived before the close of the Apostolic Age. Their interest was not theological, but practical, it being their chief purpose to present incentives for the building up of the spiritual lives of their readers. The six principal names may be noticed here.

(1) *Clement of Rome* (96-98). Nothing is known of this writer save what we have from the single piece of literature which was written by him. Because of disturbances which were agitating and dividing the church at Corinth, they addressed an epistle to the Roman church, seeking their advice. Clement answered, in the name of the church, of which he was then probably the leading elder. The epistle is known as I Clement, and was written about 96-98 A. D. The little homily known as II Clement is most probably not authentic.

(2) *Ignatius* (c. 107). The life of this writer is largely unknown, but it is thought that he became bishop of Antioch about 69 A. D., and was possibly a disciple of the Apostle John. In 107 A. D. he was condemned by Trajan to be taken as a prisoner to Rome, there to

be devoured by wild beasts in the amphitheater. While on the way to Rome he wrote seven epistles, which have come down to us in fairly complete and dependable form. The titles are: Ephesians, Magnesians, Tralians, Romans, Philadelphians, Smyrneans, Polycarp. Others ascribed to him are not genuine.

(3) *Polycarp* (c. 107). This eminent Christian leader was born about 68 A. D., and suffered martyrdom about 155. We cannot be certain about the date and place of his birth, but it is probable that he was educated at Smyrna, in Asia Minor, where he met the Apostle John, and became his disciple. He afterward became the leading elder of the church at Smyrna, where he became very popular and influential, his reputation extending throughout all Asia Minor, and even into Macedonia and probably Jerusalem and Rome. He suffered martyrdom at Smyrna in 155 by being burned at the stake. Of his numerous writings the only one extant is his "Epistle to the Philippians," written about 107 A. D.

(4) *Hermas* (c. 120). To this name is ascribed one apocalyptic document written at Rome about 120 A. D., known as "The Shepherd of Hermas." Of the author nothing whatever is known. The document is only of moderate value as related to NT criticism.

(5) *Papias* (c. 130). Of this widely famed Christian leader of the first century we know but little. He was born about 60 A. D., and died about 140. He doubtless served for most of his life as bishop of Hierapolis, and is thought by many to have been a disciple of John. The only known product of his pen was a work

entitled, "Expositions of the Oracles of the Lord," written c. 130 A. D. Only a few fragments are extant.

(6) *Barnabas* (c. 130). An epistle ascribed to this name has come down to us in two important manuscripts. It is certain the writer was not the companion of Paul by that name, but there is nothing impossible about the name being genuine. Nothing, however, is known of the author.

## 2. *The Apologists.*

We approach here that literature which was written in defense of the Christian religion, because of the attacks of pagan prejudice and the persecution of Rome. We notice only those of most importance to the NT student.

(1) *Justin Martyr*. This great Christian philosopher was born in Samaria soon after 100 A. D. Early in his life he took an interest in philosophy and investigated the Stoic, Pythagorean, Peripatetic and Platonic philosophies, but found no satisfaction for his thirst after knowledge until he became acquainted with and accepted Christianity. He became a Christian about 133 A. D. at Ephesus. His life was spent as a Christian philosopher and writer, and was terminated in martyrdom at Rome about A. D. 165. His extant works are two Apologies, written about 150, and his "Dialogue with Trypho," which was produced about 160.

(2) *Marcion*. This man was practically a Gnostic, and could not be strictly classed as a Christian Alogist—though he defended Christianity as he understood it—but since he belonged to this period of history we will consider him in this group. He came to Rome about 139 A. D., and his views having been rejected by the

Roman church, he started a separatist movement known as Marcionism. His interest to the NT student is represented in the collection of NT books, consisting of a revision of Luke's Gospel and ten epistles of Paul (omitting the Pastorals), which he made to displace the Old Testament as scriptures, one of his chief tenets being repudiation of the Old Testament as a revelation from God.

(3) *Tatian*. He was a disciple of Justin, having been an Assyrian philosopher before his conversion to Christianity. The date and place of his birth and death are unknown. His extant writings were probably produced between 160 and 170 A. D. His "Address to the Greeks" is an attack upon paganism and a defense of Christianity combined. He is chiefly known for his "Diatessaron," a primitive Harmony of the Gospels, and the official gospel of the Syrian churches.

(4) *Irenæus*. Irenæus was born in Asia Minor about 100 A. D., and was a disciple of Polycarp at Smyrna, thus being only one step removed from the apostle John. He went early in life to the Gallic churches in Western Europe, and became bishop of Lyons about 180. Two of his works are extant, the most important bearing the title, "Against Heresies," the other being "In Proof of the Apostolic Preaching."

(5) *Tertullian*. This writer is described by E. J. Goodspeed as "the founder of Latin Christian literature" (Matthews-Smith, *Dic. of Rel. and Ethics*, p. 442). Before his conversion to Christianity Tertullian was a Roman attorney, and practiced law in Rome for several years. He became a Christian about 195, and moved to Carthage about 197. Shortly after this he

wrote his "Apology," his most important work. He produced various other works, which influenced Christian thought for many centuries. In the latter part of his life he left the Catholic Church and became a Montanist.

### 3. *The Ecclesiastical Writers.*

By 200 A. D. the conception of Christianity as constituting a Catholic Church was thoroughly formulated. Hence the writers from that period on reflect what we may call an ecclesiastical consciousness. The catholicity of Christianity is a large factor in their thinking. Though some of them do not in any specific way advocate the idea of a Catholic Church, yet this conception clearly determines their point of view. Just where to make the dividing line on this matter, and what writers to include in the group, is a difficult point to decide, and must be done to some extent arbitrarily. We shall be pleased here to include the names of Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Epiphanius, Eusebius and Jerome. This is only a partial list, but presents the more important names as related to NT study.

(1) *Clement of Alexandria.* We have here one of the greatest scholars and Christian writers of Ancient times. He succeeded Pantæus as head of the catechetical school of Alexandria about 190 A. D., at which post he remained until driven away by persecution in 203. During this period he wrote three works of importance, "The Exhortation," "The Tutor," and "The Miscellanies." His death occurred about 215.

(2) *Origen.* Pupil and successor of Clement in the Alexandrian school, he was doubtless the greatest Biblical scholar and theologian of early Christianity. His



only possible rival for that place would be Jerome, who may have been his peer in ability and training, but fell far below him in actual achievement. His father was martyred in 202, and Origen barely escaped sharing the same fate. He became head of the Alexandrian school while a youth of only eighteen, and remained in that position until excluded and banished from Alexandria in 230 by the bishop, Demetrius, because Origen had submitted to ordination while on a visit to Cæsarea. After his deposition and banishment he returned to Cæsarea, and established there a popular school of extended influence. He died as a result of torture inflicted upon him during the Decian persecution. His most important work in Biblical criticism was his "Hexapla" and "Tetrapla." Next to them we might mention "De Principiis" and "Against Celsus."

(3) *Epiphanius*. He was bishop of Constantia and metropolitan of Cyprus. In a very decided sense he may be classed as an ecclesiastical writer. He was a profound and able writer, strongly inclined toward asceticism, and a zealous defender of orthodoxy. He was the first to openly impeach the teachings of Origen, and condemned him as the "source of all heresies." His chief works are "Fast Anchored," "The Medicine-chest," and "Weights and Measures." The last is of first importance to the Biblical student, for it deals with the books of the Bible. Epiphanius died about 403.

(4) *Eusebius*. He was the first great church historian. He was ordained bishop of Cæsarea c. 314, and was prominent in the council of Nicea in 325, being the leader of the compromise party. His ability as a scholar was far beyond the ordinary, having been demon-

strated in his "Church History," which is still regarded as a source book of great value. He died about 340 A. D.

(5) *Jerome*. Jerome was born in Dalmatia about 340 A. D., and received his early education at Rome. No scholar of antiquity was more competent, though to some extent he abused his ability. He familiarized himself with both Hebrew and Greek, and did a vast amount of work in Biblical criticism. His greatest work was a translation of the Bible into Latin, known as the Vulgate. His contribution to Christian learning was extensive and of real value. The date of his death was about 420.

## II. RELATION OF EARLY CHRISTIAN LITERATURE TO THE NEW TESTAMENT.

As the disciples of Jesus turned away from Mt. Olivet, after witnessing the ascension of their Lord, they faced a colossal task. The real proportions of their task they did not themselves realize. The message and plan of which they were the sole representatives must be published to all the nations of the earth. By virtue of its own inherent nature Christianity burst the bounds of Judaism, flowed out from Jerusalem, and swept beyond the confines of Palestine. The conversion of Saul of Tarsus, the Hellenist-Pharisee, linked the new religion on to the great world about it. Ere it had passed out of the first century of its history its adherents numbered many thousands, and were represented in practically every part of the world empire of Rome. In less than a hundred years Christianity had taken its place in history as a factor of world import. Just how did it succeed in so gripping the experience of humanity

as it invaded the pagan world about it? What were the phenomena presented by Christianity in its reaction upon the religious consciousness of the world into which it came? Certainly no questions could be of more intense interest to the Christian student. The answer is to be found, first of all, in the NT, and next, in the early Christian literature outside of the NT. Of course not all phases of this great religio-historical question are within the province of this discussion, but only those features which relate to the NT as such. There are two matters which require consideration.

1. *The Place of the New Testament in Early Christianity.*

From the birth of Jesus to 325 we are dealing with Christianity in the formative period. Here the matter of factors is of supreme importance. What forces and elements contributed to the shaping of this marvelous religion? We may note at least five predominant factors. They were the personal influence of Jesus himself upon his own generation; the influence of the apostles and leading disciples, based upon the experience created by their contact with him, and their use of his teachings; the new and practical interpretation which these early disciples gave the Old Testament; the literary productions which originated in the apostolic age, and which afterward came to be our NT; and finally, the reaction of Christianity upon its historical environment. It is the part played by our NT in this formative process which we are now considering. How much had the NT to do with determining the ultimate character of the Christian religion? This question we may consider from two points of view.

(1) *Effects of the NT upon Early Christian Life.* The statement may be made without fear of controversy that the highest moral and religious ideals ever presented to human life are to be found in the NT. It may easily be seen from an appreciative study of early Christian literature that these high ideals had their effect upon the life and character of the first adherents of Christianity. That their practice did not always conform to their theories is not surprising, but the acceptance of the NT ideals as the standards of right living is beyond doubt. And even in actual moral conduct the early Christians were so far above the pagan world about them as to evoke on several occasions the expressed surprise and admiration of their enemies. Of course these ideals were transferred to some degree by tradition, but as the years passed Christianity came more and more to depend upon the written records of the NT for their knowledge of the apostolic standards of right living. By the year 150 we may safely say that the moral and religious character of Christianity is the product of the NT.

(2) *Effects of the NT Upon Early Christian Thought.* Here we enter the important realm of theological development. The doctrinal content of Christianity holds extraordinary significance. Christianity is the only truly rational religion, and has always made a distinctive appeal to the thought life of the race. Hence the theological element of its nature is very essential. The ideas which compose this theological element find their basis in the NT. Of course the influence of Greek philosophy gave new forms to Christian conceptions, but the essential substance was derived from the NT. Its ideas and forms of expression were included in the

very earliest literature (Clem. Rom. 97 A. D.). For the first half century or more after the apostolic age there were but very few verbal quotations of the NT, but the reflections of thought and language are frequent and conclusively evident. From not later than 180 (Irenaeus) on, the extensive use of NT quotations appears, though always with more or less inaccuracy. There was no effort at exact reproduction of language in the quotations employed by the early Christian writers.

At first the language of the NT was used by them in expressing doctrine, but not in proving a debated point. For proof the Old Testament was appealed to exclusively. By the last half of the second century, however, the NT is being used as authoritative ground for doctrine, and by 250 it is thought of as authoritative Christian scriptures. Its influence was from the first dominant in the development of theology, for even in the use of the Old Testament the earliest writers, by what were often improper modes of interpretation, brought its language and ideas into harmony with NT conceptions.

## 2. *Proof of the Authenticity of the New Testament.*

It may be easily appreciated that very valuable evidence may be deduced from the thousands of pages written in this ancient period relative to the origin and authorship of our NT books. The further back we can trace this evidence the more valuable it becomes. The testimony is of two kinds.

(1) *Use of a Book.* The quotations or reflections of a book indicate that the author was acquainted with it and regarded it as of sufficient importance to incorporate

its words or ideas into his own discussion. This says nothing of who the author of the NT book was, but is nevertheless ample proof of its high rank. This superior position argues for the exceptional influence of the author. A further value of this kind of testimony is that it indicates how early we may know that a particular book was in existence. For instance, the critics of the Tuebingen School claimed that Ephesians was written toward the middle of the second century, but Kirsopp Lake finds two reflections of Ephesians in the epistle of Clement of Rome, about 98 A. D. Thus the lateness of the book is proven wrong, and we know that it was at least written in the first century. This adds one argument for the Pauline authorship.

(2) *Ascription of a Book to a Particular Author.* There are multitudes of references in early Christian literature to books of the NT when the author of the book is mentioned by name. There appear even extended discussions of the problems of authorship. Such testimony is of exceedingly high value, when we consider how near these writers were to the period when our NT was produced, and how much data they had which is lost to us. And these writers had no cause for trying to deceive anyone. Theological interest had little place in their treatment of NT books, for their ideas of the inspiration of the NT had made little advancement. They may be safely regarded as men of exceptional integrity of character, of intellectual ability, and honest seekers after the facts. Hence their testimony is very reliable.

A few examples of the testimony of early Christian writers are here appended, for illustration. The numer-



als represent the number of reflections of the given book in the writings of the author mentioned.

CLEMENT OF ROME:		IGNATIUS:	
Synoptic Gospels .....	7	Synoptics .....	10
John .....	1	Paul .....	33
Acts .....	3	Acts .....	2
Paul .....	24	John .....	6
Hebrews .....	16	Catholic Epp. ....	2
Peter .....	4		
James .....	3		
Rev. ....	1		
		Total .....	53
Total .....	59		
BARNABAS:		POLYCARP:	
Synoptics .....	7	Synoptics .....	5
Paul .....	9	Paul .....	34
I Peter .....	3	Heb. ....	2
II Peter .....	1	I Peter .....	11
Rev. ....	1	John .....	2
		James .....	1
		I Jno. ....	1
		II Jno. ....	2
Total .....	21	Total .....	58

All these lists include disputed books, and combined they include all the books of our NT except Philemon, III John and Jude. As an illustration of direct ascription of authorship we offer a fragment from Papias:

“Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately everything that he remembered, without, however, recording in order what was either said or done by Christ. For neither did he hear the Lord, nor did he follow him, but afterward, as I said, attended Peter, who adapted his instructions to the needs of his hearers, but had no design of giving a connected account of the Lord’s oracles. So then Mark made no mistakes, while he thus wrote down some things as he remembered them, for he made it his one care not to omit anything that he heard, or to set down any false statement therein.”





PART III.  
**RESULTS**



## CHAPTER XI.

### A GENERAL SURVEY.

About a century and a half has now been devoted to a critical study of the NT. Spasmodic efforts prior to that period made a few valuable contributions, but NT criticism may be said to have begun with Semler (died 1791). These hundred and fifty years of ardent critical effort by hundreds of able scholars have not failed to arrive at some real and definite results. However, conclusions are by no means fixed and final on any point—probably never will be. The most substantial result achieved has been the analysis of the field. It is now possible for the NT student to gain a comprehensive view of the great main lines of NT criticism. The avenues of research have been blazed out, so that one may proceed with intelligence and without waste of effort. We know where the chief problems lie and can address ourselves to them in an effective way. NT criticism at its present stage is proceeding along three principal lines.

1. *Jesus and His Teaching.* At the center of the field of NT criticism stands the Life of Christ. All other problems spring from it and derive their significance from its momentous importance. So the chief task of criticism is to discern the facts about Jesus. While the formulated definitions of his person and work belong to the province of theology, yet criticism must gather and interpret the phenomena upon which the judgment of his person and work is based.

Criticism must first ask how we know such a person as Jesus really lived, and whence we derive our knowl-

edge of his character and career. This question directs attention to the four gospels. When their trustworthiness as historical documents has been passed upon, we are then ready to study Jesus himself. Criticism is supposed to approach him divested of all *a priori* considerations, and frankly contemplate him in his first century environment, study his ministry and teaching, compare them with the other products of his own generation, and in the light of these facts work out the best hypothesis with which to account for him. Faith and creed are to be waived until criticism arrives at its results. This is the ideal, but it can be only relatively realized, for the human mind is so constructed that it cannot absolutely divest itself of prepossessions.

2. *The Primitive Disciples and Their Teaching.* What did those with whom Jesus came in contact think of him? This question calls us to the consideration of primitive Christian thought. The earliest records we have of this thought and the life which it produced are in the book of Acts. We should next seek to determine just which books of the NT may be regarded as the product of primitive Christian thought. When we have the records and products before us we are prepared to discern its contents, and consider them in the light of their environment and antecedents. By this method we may discover what the primitive disciples thought of Jesus and why.

3. *Paul and His Teaching.* The interpreter of Jesus who has most profoundly impressed subsequent generations was Paul. Sharp contests have been waged over the accuracy of that interpretation. This problem introduces us into an investigation of the man's experience and environment. Before we judge Paul's interpretation

of Jesus we must account for Paul. His life and conceptions must have had an origin, so the necessity is thrust upon us to explain the origin of Paul's religion. But this we cannot do effectively without some idea of what his religion was. It is therefore the most effective method for criticism to begin with Paul's literature, and then proceed to a study of his experience and teaching in the light of his historical environment. As a result it is our happy privilege to know in just what degree Paul, the world's greatest Christian, was the product of Jesus of Nazareth.





## CHAPTER XII.

### THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS.

We have seen that the person and ministry of Jesus necessarily occupy the foreground in NT criticism. In approaching our study of him we need first to determine the reliability of our sources of information, and in pursuit of that investigation we come first to the Synoptic Gospels.

The Synoptic Gospels have passed through varied—indeed, romantic—fortunes during the last hundred years. Before the middle of the nineteenth century German scholarship had challenged their historical reliability *in toto*. Strauss, with the unbridled assumptions of his mythical theory, swept away all of their substantial framework, leaving but the barest residuum of real history, and even over that remnant he left a question mark. But he found only a few followers and no successful support. Gradually these three simple narratives of the life of the Great Galilean have, by their own intrinsic merit, won their way back to practically undisputed rank as historical sources. Their victory has not come as the result of a mere reaction of religious sentiment, but represents the calm conclusion of candid critical investigation. The change of attitude has been induced by the recognition and consideration of the following series of facts.

1. The demonstrably *early origin* of the Gospels in their present literary form. Long ago it was seen that Baur's extremely late dates for these documents were wide of the mark. For nearly a half century now an

average of the views of NT scholars would not carry them beyond the first decade of the second century, and there has been in recent years a decided disposition among even liberal scholars, led by Harnack, to move far back toward the middle of the first century. If they originated so nearly contemporaneous with the facts they record, these documents could not possibly be the mere creatures of myth.

2. The known *habits and capacities of the primitive Christian mind*. That the Jewish Christians, and to some extent the Gentile Christians, of the first century were competent to carry in memory and accurately preserve as tradition a large body of facts and teachings is nowhere denied. The rabbinic traditions of the Jews, transmitted orally for from two to seven centuries, were vastly greater in extent than the material represented in our first three Gospels. If such a mass of tradition could be accurately preserved for such a length of time by independent human faculties, even granting the smallest degree of divine interest in the establishment of Christianity, it is not difficult to believe that the Gospel material could be retained for a few decades. Therefore confidence in the validity of the Synoptics makes no necessary demand for the intervention of the supernatural.

3. The *intimate relations* of the Gospel authors with the scenes of Jesus's life. It is now almost universally admitted that Mark's Gospel is ultimately based upon the preaching and personal instruction of the apostle Peter. There are not many who deny that the apostle Matthew had some hand in the production of the First Gospel. Though Luke had no known connection with a personal associate of the Master, the high historical value of his sources is being more widely recognized all the time, and his own claim of access to eye-witnesses

(Lk. 1:2) is winning general acceptance. Such contact with the original facts obviates the possibility of pure legend, and we may well ask how it could leave way for the accumulation of legendary glosses? Just at that point, however, a considerable margin still remains for the operation of one's theological point of view, due to the paucity of our knowledge of the *method* of tradition.

4. The *confirmation* of many doubtful points by the discovery of documentary and archæological corroboration. Much that the liberal critic of fifty years ago ridiculed as crass ignorance on the part of an evangelist, is now known to be verified historical fact. So often has it been proven that first century writers knew some things which nineteenth and twentieth century critics do not know, that the latter are growing more cautious in their assumptions. This work of confirmation has especially affected Luke's writings, and has been largely the achievement of Sir William Ramsay, with valuable contributions from Prof. Cobern of America, and others.

The undeniable authentication of this list of facts has placed the Synoptic Gospels on a footing of great historical respectability. We may now devote our attention to some particular features of their criticism. There are three chief problems: viz., their *sources*, *date* and *authorship*.

#### I. SOURCES.

So far as we have knowledge the earliest Biblical scholar to notice the striking similarities of the first three Gospels was Jerome. From his day to the present the phenomenon has increasingly engaged the attention of NT students. It has also been observed that there are differences which are as striking and significant as the

similarities. These observations have given rise to the question, What explanation of the origin and sources of the Synoptic Gospels will best account for their similarities and differences? This historico-literary question we call the *Synoptic Problem*. In this discussion we will first call attention to the *phenomena* of the problem, then review the *solutions* which have been suggested, and finally organize the results of our investigation under some definite *conclusions*.

### 1. *Phenomena.*

We have intimated above that the phenomena fall under two general classes, similarities and differences. A mere glance at the texts of the first three gospels in parallel columns, as we find them in the specially arranged "Harmonies," is enough to disclose the fact that they have a very large amount of material in common. This similarity often amounts to exact verbal correspondence in passages of considerable length. As an example we may examine the incident of the controversy with the Pharisees relative to fasting, recorded in Mk. 2:18-22, with parallels in Mt. 9:14-17 and Lk. 5:33-39. In Mark's account of this there are 147 words (according to ASV). Matthew's account reproduces 103 of Mark's words, and Luke's 90. Mt., Mk. and Lk. have 75 words in exact agreement. This exact verbal agreement of all three occurs in certain corresponding verses, which means that the entire expression of that feature of the narrative is identical. A number of other passages may be observed in which the same sort of phenomena appear. Then there are differences that are just as marked. For instance, Mt. and Lk. give in their nativity accounts substantially the same, or supplementary, facts, yet their records are obviously independent.

More significant, however, are the differences which break right into extended correspondences between the Gospels, as, for instance, Luke's introduction of the raising of the widow's son (Lk. 7:11-17) in a long section parallel with Mt. (cf. Burton-Goodspeed, *Har. of Syn. Gos.*, p. 61). These are some of the indications upon the surface of the text which have given rise to a century and a half of diligent effort in quest of a solution. These phenomena we will now gather about five crucial points.

(1) *The Preface to Luke's Gospel.* We consider here a phenomenon which has not received due attention in the study of the Synoptic Problem. Not that it has been disregarded, but scholars have viewed it from a distance, as it were, and failed to discern the remarkable array of historical intimations which a closer scrutiny will disclose. A more pregnant passage is scarcely to be found in all literature. Every line contains a gleam of historical interest; every verse is replete with reflections of the literary customs of the times. By using this passage as our point of departure we will be most likely to proceed in the direction of a true solution to the problem before us. It is of great significance that the most widely accepted results in the investigation of this problem find corroboration in Luke's preface. As we examine its suggestions we will not be pioneering in strange and unexplored realms, but will find ourselves following along the well-beaten paths of a half century of cautious criticism, guided in our progress by the way-marks blazed by the world's best scholarship. Our gain will be that we will find a new and strong reason for assurance in pressing our conclusions and may thereby take courage to advance to more clearly marked posi-

tions. A close examination of these verses exhibits four facts of important bearing upon the Synoptic Problem.

a. Gospel writing had already become a prevalent practice when Luke began his work. "Forasmuch as *many* have taken in hand to draw up a narrative, etc." (Lk. 1:1). It has been maintained by some that this statement has reference to the rehearsing of the oral tradition, which it is possible to understand from the Greek. But notice that Luke puts himself in the same class (vs. 3: "it seemed good to me also"), and his undertaking is "to write." This interpretation is further strengthened by the now well-known fact that writing was exceedingly common in the first century Mediterranean world. A passage from Pliny informs us that his uncle, the elder Pliny, a contemporary of Paul, produced during his lifetime a large number of books, and bequeathed to his nephew a hundred and sixty notebooks containing material which he had gathered by most diligent research. "We gather from literature that books innumerable were produced on subjects often as special and minute as those selected for a German thesis, and that almost every town worth the name, at least in the Greek-speaking part of the empire, produced an author of sorts" (Tucker, *Life in the Roman World of Nero and Paul*, pp. 392, 394).

The transmission of tradition in oral form was still widely practiced among the Jews, especially those of Palestine, but it was being rapidly abandoned in the Gentile world, as at least one ancient record testifies (cf. Hawkins, *Horæ Synopticæ*, p. 54). The lack of the printed page made these ancients more dependent upon memory than are we moderns, by far, but in the days of the apostles such transmission was rare, and the



written page was used instead, the reproduction of manuscripts being a widely practiced profession.

Another important bit of evidence bearing upon this fact has been the discovery in Egypt of papyrus fragments containing sayings of Jesus, which appear to be of great antiquity. Of course these documents could not have been produced as early as Luke's day, but they testify to the custom of producing such "little gospels."

When we examine the texts of our first three Gospels we find indications of such a multiplicity of sources. The evidences which we have are now pointing unerringly toward the literal truth of Luke's statement that in his day there were "many" who were undertaking to write gospels.

*b.* We next observe that these first written gospels were based upon authentic oral tradition. "Even as they delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were 'eyewitnesses'" (vs. 2). A former period of criticism very positively disputed this statement, but there are now many even among the liberals who accept it almost without modification. Whether these eyewitnesses saw what they believed or claimed they saw would, however, be matter for great divergence of opinion. Yet we have made a great gain in forwarding the progress of criticism when we can secure the consent of representative scholars to the fact that our Gospels are based upon first-hand evidence. This oral tradition survived right alongside of the written gospels and was probably not wholly displaced until after the dawn of the second century. Since gospel writing in general was only the literary expression of this tradition, it would be impossible not to believe that it is extensively represented in our canonical Gospels. There has been too much disposition of recent years to ignore this ele-



ment in the Synoptics, and as a result unnecessary gaps have been left in the theories of solution. No reasonable doubt need be entertained that the Synoptic Gospels are largely indebted to oral tradition.

c. There is a very probable intimation in his preface that Luke utilized other written materials in the preparation of his Gospel. He claims to have "traced the course of all things accurately from the first" (vs. 3). Here is an unqualified claim to exhaustive research. It would be possible to place other constructions upon his language, but this is the most natural interpretation, and when we compare it with the actual phenomena of his Gospel as compared with Mt. and Mk. we find undeniable confirmation. It is scarcely possible to assume that Luke was an innovator in this method, so we have an *a priori* reason for expecting that such evidence may be found in the other two Gospels. If we find such evidences we may without hesitancy accept them; if the evidence is wanting the presumption will of course be abandoned.

d. An exceedingly interesting—though remote—suggestion in this passage is that these written gospels were used in public instruction in the churches. Luke declares his purpose to be that he may assure Theophilus "concerning the things wherein thou wast instructed" (vs. 4). We have called this a "remote suggestion" because if we had this evidence alone it would be precarious to base a conclusion thereon, but the convergence of much other evidence at the same point makes this otherwise remote suggestion quite vivid. That this practice of catechizing new converts obtained in the primitive churches is now beyond doubt. Some kind of material had to be used in this catechetical work. The use of oral tradition would serve efficiently with

Jewish Christians, but a Gentile constituency would immediately raise the demand for written "lessons." Thus we have a strong presumption in favor of the use of written gospels for such instruction and when Luke links his Gospel up with the catechumens it brings us near to certainty in our opinion. (The Greek word employed by Luke is *catechetes*.)

We have not time and space to pursue here the details of confirmation for these four suggestions offered in the results of modern critical research (cf. especially Petrie, *The Growth of the Gospels*, and Sanday, *Oxford Studies in Syn. Prob.*, intro. and sec. I), but examination of the literature on the subject will demonstrate a coincidence of exegesis and historical inquiry which is very convincing.

(2) *The Gospel of Mark*. This gospel holds a unique place in the Synoptic Problem. It furnishes the chief evidence for both the documentary and oral sources of our gospel material. It is now very generally believed that this Gospel is itself based exclusively upon oral tradition, though some scholars argue for the possibility of at least some written sources. Such a possibility we need not hesitate to allow, but the total absence of any proof precludes the founding of a theory upon this opinion. It is best for us to regard the second Gospel as derived from oral sources, and not confuse matters by speculating upon possible literary influence.

This position involves the acceptance of the priority of Mk. as compared with Mt. and Lk. Toward this conclusion all the evidence points. It necessarily results from the application of the axiomatic canon of criticism that, where literary relationship appears between two or more documents, "that one is to be accepted as, rela-

tively speaking, the original which will explain the origin of the others, but can not itself be explained as the product of the others" (Burton, *Lit. Crit. and Syn. Prob.*, p. 5). With the phenomena of the Gospels before us we may easily see how Mt. and Lk. could have used Mk., but if we adopt the reverse theory, or if we seek to disprove any literary connection, we meet with insuperable difficulties. In the first place we observe that approximately five-sixths of Mk. is embodied in Mt. and Lk. To be more exact, of the 666 verses in Mark's Gospel 500 are incorporated in the other two. Besides this there is still more of Mark's material used by only one of the other Gospels. When we include this deduction we find only 26 verses left as peculiar to Mark, and it may be reasonably explained why these have been omitted (cf. Hawkins, *Horæ Synopticæ*, pp. 114 ff). But if Mark had before him either Mt. or Lk., or both, we would never be able to understand why he should have omitted such a vast amount of their material. Again, we find that Mt. and Mk. often agree in varying from Lk., and Lk. and Mk. in varying from Mt., but Mt. and Lk. almost never agree in varying from Mk., and the agreements against Mk. which do occur are but slight verbal variations. Furthermore, we find Mt. and Lk. following (with very rare exceptions) the same order when they are parallel with Mk., but elsewhere their order is frequently very divergent. This may be easily explained upon the hypothesis that the first and third evangelists used Mk., but upon any other theory it would appear as an incredible coincidence. These three lines of objective literary evidence leave as the only rational conclusion that there is a literary relation between the three Synoptic Gospels, and that it exists in the use of Mk. by Mt. and Lk. To this conclusion

we are irresistibly drawn when we consider the strong corroborative evidence found in the preface of Lk., which undoubtedly claims a large degree of dependence upon written sources. Hence we have two well-established hypothesis in the direction of a solution: that Mk. is a product of oral tradition, and that it was employed as a written source by both Mt. and Lk.

(3) *Discourse Material in the Gospels.* The Gospel of Mk. is largely narrative, while in both Mt. and Lk. there are extensive reports of the teaching of Jesus. We face a more complicated problem when we inquire into the sources of this material. Our conclusion that Mk. was used as a written source, together with the testimony of Luke's preface, creates a strong presumption in favor of literary relationship here. To this we may add the witness of Papias that there existed in writing a group of sayings of Jesus ("Logia") originally produced by the Apostle Matthew in Aramaic. If this observation of Papias is true—and there is no reason to doubt it—then it would be quite probable that the first and third evangelists would avail themselves of such a document, even though we waive for the present the apostolic authorship of the first Gospel. An examination of the text of the Gospels confirms this probability. Compare, for instance, the exact verbal agreement between Mt. and Lk. in their parallel accounts of the preaching of John the Baptist. We find again the same phenomenon in the Sermon on the Mount, though the material is differently distributed. Further parallels of discourse between Mt. and Lk. are found in Jesus' discourse relative to John the Baptist, the woes pronounced upon the impenitent cities, the controversy with the Pharisees over the casting out of demons, instruc-

tions at the mission of the twelve and seventy, together with many detached sayings of only a few words. When one considers this group of material in a single view he can not escape the impression that he is reading the original contents of Matthew's Logia.

A significant fact in this connection is Matthew's obvious preference for discourse material. He exhibits a marked disposition to abridge the narrative material and expand the sayings. Examples of this may be seen in Mt. 4:12ff cf. Mk. 1:14ff—Lk. 4:14ff; Mt. 11:2ff cf. Lk. 7:18ff; Mt. 8:28ff cf. Mk. 5:1ff—Lk. 8:26ff, and the occurrence of five long discourses, or groups of sayings.

(4) *Independent Materials.* In the case of Mark's Gospel we have already seen that this class of material consists of only 26 out of 666 verses, and that the absence of these from the other Gospels admits of plausible explanation. But when we turn to Mt. and Lk. the case is quite different. We find each of them incorporating large sections of narrative peculiar to his own Gospel. Luke incorporates in the beginning of his Gospel a very full account of the annunciation, birth and early training of John the Baptist, which Mt. does not contain. Their accounts of the nativity and childhood of Jesus are different. One large section of Lk. 9:51-19:10) dealing chiefly with the Perea ministry, has only a few widely distributed parallels in Mt. The resurrection accounts of the two evangelists appear to be practically independent. Besides these larger sections, there are scattered narratives and sayings peculiar to each Gospel (cf. Mt. 5:7-10, 17-24, 33-38; 6:1-18; 7:22ff; 12:36-38; 13:24-30, 36-53; 10:23; 17:24-27; 18:15-35; 25:31-46; 27:3-11; Lk. 4:25ff; 5:1-



11; 6:24f; 7:11-17, 36-50; 8:1-3; 23:1-25). It is significant that the bulk of Matthew's independent material is discourse, while Luke's is narrative. The only independent discourse of any extent contained in Lk. is in the Perean section.

(5) *Divergences in Parallels*. A very suggestive phenomenon appears in the slight verbal variations found in parallel sections of two or more Gospels. This is especially noticeable when Mt. and Lk. present slight verbal differences from Mk. and most especially when they agree against Mk. in those divergences, for the reason that such agreement against Mk. presents such a decided exception (cf. Mt. 3:5—Mk. 1:5—Lk. 3:3; Mt. 3:11—Mk. 1:7—Lk. 3:16; Mt. 9:7—Mk. 2:12—Lk. 5:25; Mt. 10:2—Mk. 3:16, 17—Lk. 6:13, 14; Mt. 12:25ff—Mk. 3:22ff—Lk. 11:15ff; and a number of other instances). We might easily account for the independent divergence of either Mt. or Lk. from Mk. as a matter of editorial liberty, but when, in the midst of a passage in which they are following Mk. *verbatim*, they both *agree* in a divergence we must assume the influence of a common source different from Mk. In the light of the known customs in literary production (cf. Sanday, *Oxford Studies in Syn. Prob.*, pp. 16ff) it seems most probable that these slight agreements against Mk. represent the occasional concurrence of Mt. and Lk. in incorporating oral tradition in Marcan material. It is exceedingly significant that the divergences from Mk. are much more frequent and extensive in Mt. than in Lk. The irresistible impression created by this phenomenon is that Mt. drew much more largely from oral tradition than did Lk.

These phenomena which we have surveyed point

very definitely toward important features of a solution. These features we have but mentioned in passing, but we will now assemble and correlate them by discussing the existing theories of solution and formulating our own conclusions.

## 2. *Solutions.*

In their general character the solutions offered have been only suggestive, and intended as nothing more. No one who deserves recognition in the study of this problem claims finality for his views. This is one realm in which we are never deterred in our investigations by "settled critical opinions." There is but one settled critical opinion on the matter; namely, that we have yet much to learn relative to the origin and composition of the Synoptic Gospels. The theories of solution may be classed under two heads.

(1) *The Oral Hypothesis.* The theory has long been held and defended by NT students of really profound scholarship that all three of the Synoptic Gospels are derived from a common oral tradition. This theory has undoubtedly some distinct advantages. The chief one is that it is supported by the fact that the gospel story was oral in its first form. Hence the first gospels written of necessity were based upon oral sources. We have observed above that the only safe position is to regard the Gospel of Mark as derived from oral tradition. It has also been noticed that dependence upon oral tradition best accounts for divergences in parallel material.

But there stand in the way of this theory some grave difficulties. To begin with, there is no possible way to prove that our Gospels were the *first* written forms of the Christian tradition. We assume such for Mk. only



in the absence of evidence to the contrary, with, however, some plausible inferences in its favor. But in the case of Mt. and Lk. the evidences are at variance with this theory. There is certainly evidence for what we call the "double tradition." Mt. and Lk. are sometimes parallel through extensive sections in which Mk. joins in the correspondence. But there are also numbers of long parallel sections in which Mk. does not occur. We have seen that all the evidences point toward the use of Mk. as a written source in the former group of parallel sections; it is very probable that another written source—or sources—accounts for the latter group. When we consider these two groups or parallel sections in a single comprehensive view we discern that they have very definite limits. One group is represented exactly by our Gospel of Mk., lacking only one-sixth. It is difficult to think of the other group as miscellaneous oral tradition. And just here we may call in the Fourth Gospel, which is certainly largely dependent on oral tradition. When we compare it with Mk. we observe the decided difference. This fact opposes the theory of an exclusively oral ground for our Synoptic Gospels. For these reasons the oral hypothesis is difficult to maintain as a sole basis.

(2) *The Documentary Hypothesis.* The earliest suggestion of a common documentary source for the Synoptic Gospels was made by Eichhorn in 1794. He proposed the hypothesis that they were all three derived from different copies of a single parent document, and that the divergence resulted from variants in the copies. The details of this theory have been long ago abandoned, but its fundamental suggestion is now the position of all the leading scholars; namely, that there

is some sort of documentary relation between our first three Gospels. An objection against this theory, arising from the very inherited instincts of evangelical Christianity, is that it eliminates too much of the supernatural. Two replies are to be made to this objection. The first is that there is no cause for assuming the supernatural where there is neither evidence nor necessity for it. In the second place, the objection is ill-founded, because oral tradition was far from the sphere of the supernatural in the first century. Wherefore this objection dissolves. There are, however, two fatal objections to the hypothesis of an exclusive documentary source. The chief one is that it fails to afford a satisfactory explanation for many of the divergences, as one is compelled to conclude when he carefully compares the parallel texts of the Gospels. This is especially true of the slight agreements of Mt.-Lk. against Mk., which we have discussed above. It has also been found impossible to find the exact limits of the sources used and the respective relations of the Gospels to these sources. We can approach this more nearly in Lk. than in Mt., and in Mk. there is not an intimation of documentary dependence, so that to posit a documentary hypothesis for Mk. is to build upon pure assumption, though it is likewise pure assumption to say with finality that the author used no written sources. To these two objections, based upon objective data, we may add a third objection in the extreme probability that no writer in the age in which it is now generally agreed our Synoptic Gospels were produced would draft a gospel history without the use of oral tradition. That oral tradition was still in general use we have abundant historical reason for believing.

Let us bear in mind, however, that these are objec-

tions to an *exclusive* documentary source. They do not compel us to discard the documentary theory entirely. There are considerations which undoubtedly sustain its claim. It is quite clearly the most naturally and easily explained, since it removes the difficulties in the way of the oral theory, best accounts for the pronounced similarities, and explains satisfactorily the evidences in Mt. and Lk. of some sources of definite limits, particularly the Marcan material and their parallel discourses. But the final and unimpeachable confirmation of the documentary hypothesis as a partial explanation is found in Luke's preface, wherein, if we accept the most reasonable interpretation of his language, he declares that there existed such written documents and offers an irresistible inference that he utilized them in his own Gospel. It appears wise, then, that we should not wholly reject either the oral or the documentary hypothesis, but regard both sources as contributing to our Gospels, as we should most naturally expect, since both existed side by side through a considerable part of the Apostolic Age. The respective contributions of these sources we may approximately determine by examination of the Gospel texts.

### 3. *Conclusions.*

It would doubtless be better to give as the title of this section "suggestions" rather than "conclusions," for we are far from pretending that we have arrived at any final results. But since we are to indicate and summarize some of the evident directions in which our investigations lead, we may speak of the theories offered as conclusions. To be entirely accurate, we are

really presenting the evident elements in the Synoptic Problem which our study has disclosed. We will point out five of these elements.

(1) *The Priority of Mark.* We have seen sufficient reason for believing that Mark's Gospel is the earliest of the three, and that both Matthew and Luke employed it, the two combined using practically the entire material of Mk. We are not to assume, however, that Mk. was the earliest gospel document, for it is practically certain that others preceded it, though we have no real evidence that Mark made use of written sources. The evidences we do have make it probable that he drew at least in the main upon oral tradition. (See *per contra* Petrie, *The Growth of the Gospels*, and Bacon, *The Beginnings of Gospel Story*).

(2) *Oral Tradition.* The known historical facts of first century life combine with the phenomena of the Synoptic Gospels to furnish conclusive evidence that the evangelists drew largely upon oral sources. No other theory will admit all the facts. "Even the two-document theory . . . lacks much of meeting all the requirements of the case" (Bacon, *Intro. to the NT*, p. 177); and neither will the theory of a multiplicity of written sources account for all the phenomena. We have observed many features widely distributed in the parallel texts of the three Gospels which only the oral theory can explain. Mark's dependence upon oral tradition we have already noticed, and Mt. exhibits much more of the same character than has been formerly recognized. Critics have been disposed to regard Mt. as based almost entirely upon documentary sources, with occasional traces of oral tradition, but a close examination of the Gospel text parallel with Mk. and Lk. re-

veals many difficulties in the way of such a theory. In the first place, Matthew shows marked freedom in handling material which he uses in common with Mk. and Lk., except where that material consists of the sayings of Jesus. Then there are the brief passages inserted by Matthew in parallel material (cf. 3:14, 15; 9:13; 11:23b, 28; 12:5, 6, 36, 37; 13:23, etc.). We may further note the slight verbal variations, which occur more frequently in Mt. than in Lk. When we actually survey these phenomena as they confront us in the text of the Gospels they are very convincing. They made their impression upon Sir John Hawkins, who admits evidence in the Gospel of Matthew of a relatively large dependence upon oral sources (*Horæ Synopticae*, p. 172). The traces of oral tradition in Lk. are very slight, though there are enough to sustain the conclusion that he made some use of oral sources.

(3) *A Discourse Document.* The abundance of parallel discourse material in Mt.-Lk. not found in Mk. points unquestionably in the direction of a common discourse document used by them. The intimation of Papias that there existed in the first century an Aramaic document produced by the Apostle Matthew which contained in the main sayings of Jesus furnishes an obvious suggestion for this common source of Mt.-Lk., but we cannot be certain that this was the document employed by them. It is, however, practically certain that at least Matthew used it, and since Lk. has much discourse material in common with Mt. we find a strong probability in favor of the common source of these two Gospels being Matthew's Logia.

(4) *Editorial Material.* There are some materials in the Synoptic Gospels which are undoubtedly to be as-



signed originally to the pen of the author. Much of this consists, not in separable passages of greater or less length, but in characteristic modes of expression (cf. Hawkins, *Horæ Synopticæ*, Part I). There is impressive evidence that chapters I and II of Matthew were not only compiled but composed by the author, since the words and phrases peculiar to his Gospel predominate in these chapters (*ib.* 9f). There is probably considerably more material which may be assigned to the same source.

(5) *Miscellaneous Documents.* Luke indicates in his preface that he drew from "many" written sources. This suggestion offers a very serviceable explanation for the phenomena of the Gospel. In addition to Mark and at least one other document in common with Matthew we find evidence for three fairly distinct written sources: that which furnishes his account of the Nativity; the history of John the Baptist; and the record of the Passion and Resurrection. It is also very probable that one or more written sources furnished the material for his Perean section. Nevertheless, considerable of this material could have been incorporated from oral tradition. Just where the line between the oral and written sources falls we are not yet prepared to say. Further investigation of the problem may throw increased light upon some of these difficult questions.

## II. DATE.

There is no point in NT criticism which has suffered more modification in the past century than the dating of the Synoptic Gospels—unless the dating of the Fourth Gospel be the exception. While conservatives have held consistently to an early date, usually prior to A. D. 70,

the liberals have altered their position from the extremely late date of Baur, who placed all three near the middle of the second century (130-140), to the most recent opinion of Harnack, who places them not later than the early part of the seventh decade of the first century, with Mark well back into the fifties (cf. *Date of the Acts and the Synoptic Gospels*). It should be said, however, that but few liberals have accepted Harnack's extremely early date, and even a good many conservatives differ from him. Some critics find it necessary to assign a later date, well toward the end of the first century, in order to be consistent with their own theories as to the documentary sources of these Gospels (e. g., Bacon, Moffatt), but the chief objection offered to the early date is the detailed description of the destruction of Jerusalem found in the Eschatological Discourse of Jesus (Mt. 24-Mk. 13-Lk. 21), and other traces of knowledge of the fate of the Jewish race. To assume a date earlier than A. D. 70 would in consistency require to also assume supernatural knowledge on the part of Jesus, and this the liberal critic declines to do. Yet as pronounced an anti-supernaturalist as Harnack finds it possible to remove this difficulty (*Date of Ac. and Syn. Gos.*, pp. 116-124). Of course to the evangelical conservative no difficulty appears at this point.

The legitimate scientific method is to waive all *a priori* assumptions for or against the supernatural, and settle the case on the best available evidence. This evidence appears at three points.

### 1. *The Conclusion of Acts.*

We are consciously violating logical consistency to inject the question of the date of Acts in this connection, but since the whole problem of the date of the



Synoptic Gospels hinges upon this point such a breach of literary propriety is unavoidable. That Acts bears a close literary relation to the third Gospel is now practically undisputed, and this carries with it the conclusion that Lk. is the earlier writing. The priority of Mk. to Lk. is also granted now without exception. The chronological relation of Mt. to these writings still remains problematic, but there is pretty general agreement that it is not far from the date of Lk. Hence the dating of Acts offers an approximate solution to our problem.

For the date of Acts we have a most decisive piece of objective evidence. This appears in the closing paragraph of the book (28:30f). It presents Paul as dwelling in his rented quarters, actively engaged in missionary effort. If the book was written after Paul's martyrdom, why is there no account of the close of his life? Various answers have been offered: (1) that Luke disliked to present the martyrdom of Paul because of his friendly attitude toward the Roman government (but how friendly would he probably be after Rome has slain his leader and hero?); (2) that the martyrdom of Paul was already so well known that it did not need rehearsal; (3) that when Paul arrived in Rome Luke had reached the goal of his treatise; (4) that he intended to write a third book (cf. Ac. 1:1) in which he would give the additional information; (5) that he was interrupted at this point in his composition; (6) that he had to discontinue because he ran out of paper (*Sic!*). All these explanations leave their own impression of question-begging, and require no refutation. The most reasonable construction to place upon the significance of this abrupt termination of Acts is that the last events recorded were synchronous with the composition of the

book. All other efforts at explanation “transgress against inward probability and all the psychological laws of historical composition. The more clearly we see that the trial of St. Paul, and above all his appeal to Caesar is the chief subject of the last quarter of the Acts, the more hopeless does it appear that we can explain why the narrative breaks off as it does, otherwise than by assuming that the trial had actually not yet reached its close. It is no use to struggle against this conclusion” (Harnack, *Date of Acts*, etc., p. 97). Harnack adds in greater detail a number of very convincing evidences in corroboration of this testimony (*ib.* pp. 99ff). The most reasonable date for the conclusion of Acts is about A. D. 62, which would cause the third Gospel to fall about 61, and Mt. probably not later than 63. The very convincing evidence that Mt. and Lk. were written near the same time is that neither Gospel reflects any use of the other, at least in the form in which we now know them. If Mark was written in Rome—which is most probable—it might have been produced as late as 60, though an earlier date is more likely. Two further evidences appear in support of this early date.

## 2. *Luke's Preface.*

There is no specific declaration in Luke's preface which offers us any clue to the date of his Gospel, but there are several very vivid reflections. These may be most briefly and concisely presented by paraphrasing the passage. “Since there appears to be arising a widespread practice of producing written gospels . . ., and since there are still alive the great majority of those who are acquainted with the events by personal contact, I have concluded to write a gospel also, one so thoroughly wrought out that catechumens may have a fuller account

than heretofore." Of course this paraphrase is based upon inference, but the more closely one studies these verses the more forcible these inferences become. The passage leaves quite clearly the impression that gospel writing was in the early stages of its progress. Many had put forth an effort in this direction, but it seemed still to be in the category of experiment. Sufficient time had not yet elapsed for any of these efforts to reach a place of pre-eminence and become standardized. One may ponder how strange these words would seem if written twenty years after Mk., Lk. and Mt. appeared. This preface was undoubtedly not a great while after gospel writing began. A further intimation of early date is that Luke appears to have access to an abundance of evidence based upon first hand knowledge (eyewitnesses). He regards the "eyewitnesses and ministers of the word" as the ultimate and most reliable source, and at the same time claims that he has "traced the course of all things accurately from the first," for which reason he feels he can write so that others can "know the certainty" of what he records. If we attribute to Luke both honesty and intelligence, we must suppose that he had access to these eyewitnesses, his recognized ultimate source. Of course this is pure inference, but it at least has weight as corroborative evidence. We can safely say that Luke's preface fits an early date better than a late one.

### 3. *The Demand for Written Gospels.*

When we compare the facts that the material of gospel story was first embodied doubtless in full in oral tradition, and that when the oral process was well advanced there arose alongside of it a custom of writing gospels, we of necessity enquire, What occasion called forth the written gospels? If the gospel material was

already widely circulated in oral tradition, why commit it to writing? In the light of the facts relative to the first century world, as we now know them (cf. Petrie, *Growth of the Gospels*; Tucker, *Life in the Roman World of Nero and St. Paul*, ch. 20), little doubt can remain that the demand for written gospels arose from the difference between the Jewish and Gentile methods of transmitting information. Rabbinic instruction fixed the oral method thoroughly in the life of the Jews, but Greek culture had made the Gentile world to a great extent dependent upon the written page. Consequently, when the effort was made to instruct Gentile Christians in the facts and teachings of the ministry of Jesus a need arose for these materials in writing. That the written gospels were prepared for just that purpose seems evident. "So far as we can judge from our earliest records, 'the memoirs of the Apostles' were chiefly drawn upon for the purposes of (i) exhibiting 'Jesus of Nazareth' as 'approved by mighty works and wonders and signs' (Ac. 2:22), and (ii) of supplying accounts of his teaching" (Hawkins, *Horæ Synopticæ*, p. 127). Hawkins gives, from a variety of sources, convincing proof of the truth of this observation. The beginning of gospel writing was catechetical in design, and was required for Gentile converts. Then there is a probability approximating certainty that the demand for written gospels arose as soon as the churches acquired a considerable Gentile constituency. This came A. D. 50 to 60. We may well believe that the year 55 saw already in existence many gospel documents, and by the year 61 the number would be greatly increased, and many divergences and confusions would be appearing, so that the master hand of a Luke would be needed to draw up "in order" a full and trustworthy account of "all things."

All the probabilities in the history of gospel writing favor an early date for the Synoptic Gospels. So we have the strongest possible evidential support for placing Mk. at or before 60, Lk. about 61, and Mt. not later than 63.

### III. AUTHORSHIP.

In coming to the consideration of this matter one should first apprehend just what place it holds in the study of the Synoptic Gospels. These Gospels are themselves anonymous documents. Wherefore our conclusion as to authorship must of necessity be based upon that which appears most probable in the light of tradition and their own contents. And whatever the conclusions may be, criticism is not greatly affected thereby. Some press the claim relative to Mt. that we have a much more reliable source of information if we can prove that it was written by an apostle, but the fact is that we repose as much confidence in the testimony of the second and third Gospels as we do in the first, when no one ever thinks of any need for claiming that they were written by apostles. It is true that Mk. is believed to be closely associated with the tradition represented in Peter, but no one is inclined for that reason to regard it as superior to Lk. In fact, if superiority is to be assigned to either as a historical source, the verdict of the great majority of even the most orthodox would fall upon Lk.—the one Gospel for which no direct apostolic connection is claimed. Nor is the question of divine inspiration in any way involved, for the inspired text does not in the case of either Gospel propose the name of its author. Therefore our critical procedure is entirely unobstructed by theological interests as we approach the question now before us.



1. *Matthew.*

This Gospel is the most problematical of the three at the point of authorship. The majority of the conservative scholars have contended for the direct apostolic authorship, while a few conservatives and many liberals have held the position that it is of indirect apostolic authorship, having been produced by a disciple of Matthew, using as his chief source material compiled by the apostle. A number of liberals, though not the majority, deny any connection of the Gospel with the apostle whose name it bears, unless some very remote relation, and believe that it was written in the late first or early second century. Of these three theories the second, as a mediating proposition, has proven the most attractive. Without assuming beforehand the truth of either, let us examine the evidence.

(1) *External Evidence.* The third century accepted this Gospel without question as coming from the hand of the apostle Matthew. This view is represented at the end of the second century by Irenaeus, but beyond his date (c. 80) there is no direct evidence as to authorship, though the existence of the book can be traced back into the last decade of the first century, since it was used by Clement of Rome. The most important bit of external evidence is that left us by Papias, as reported by Eusebius, who says, "Matthew composed the Logia (oracles) in the Hebrew tongue, and everyone interpreted (translated) them as he could." This most ancient testimony relative to the Gospel points to an Aramaic work instead of a Greek one. Some scholars have suggested that our Greek Gospel is a translation of the Aramaic, but this is not a tenable position, for two reasons. In the first place, the quotations from the Old Testament are quite cer-

tainly taken from the Septuagint text rather than being a direct translation from the Hebrew. The chief objection, however, to the translation theory is that the language of Mt. is not of the character of translation Greek. If it were rendered from the Hebrew there would inevitably be some traces of the Semitic idiom. Hence we must conclude that our first Gospel is an original Greek composition. The only connection of the Logia with it seems to have been as a principal source. Then we can see how it is altogether possible that the only connection of the Apostle Matthew with the first Gospel was through his Aramaic Logia. Therefore external evidence leaves the question undecided.

(2) *Internal Evidence.* Though external evidence fails to determine the identity of the author, internal evidence makes quite clear his general character. That he was a Palestinian Jew is evident from his familiarity with the geography of Palestine (cf. 2:1, 23; 3:1, 5, 13; 4:12, 13, 23-25; 8:5, 23, 38; 14:34; etc.), with Jewish history and practice (cf. 1:18; 2:4; 14:1; 26:59; etc.), and with the Old Testament (cf. 1:22; 2:56; 4:14-16; etc.). He exhibits a distinctly Jewish attitude and point of view (cf. 2:20, 21; 15:24; etc.). It is just as evident that he was also a Christian and of a decidedly universal point of view.

This cosmopolitan attitude of the author is our first clue to the apostolic authorship. As a publican Matthew would certainly be devoid of Jewish exclusiveness. Furthermore, as a tax collector, especially if he gathered toll on one of the Roman roads entering Capernaum, as many believe, he was acquainted with both Hebrew (Aramaic) and Greek, and was the one best prepared to render his own Logia into Greek. As compared with



Luke, the author of the first Gospel shows great liberty in dealing with his sources. If he was an apostle, this absence of constraint in handling the evangelic tradition would be most natural; otherwise it would seem rather strange. The large place given to discourse in the Greek Gospel shows that its author was especially interested in that feature of the ministry of Jesus, which trait must have been true of the Apostle Matthew, if Papias is correct in assigning to him an Aramaic document composed in the main of sayings of Jesus.

Thus a consideration of all the evidences favors the tradition prevailing at the end of the second century that the first Gospel was written by the Apostle Matthew. The chief objections to this view are based upon presumptions against the supernatural, and have no legitimate place in a court of pure historical criticism.

## 2. *Mark.*

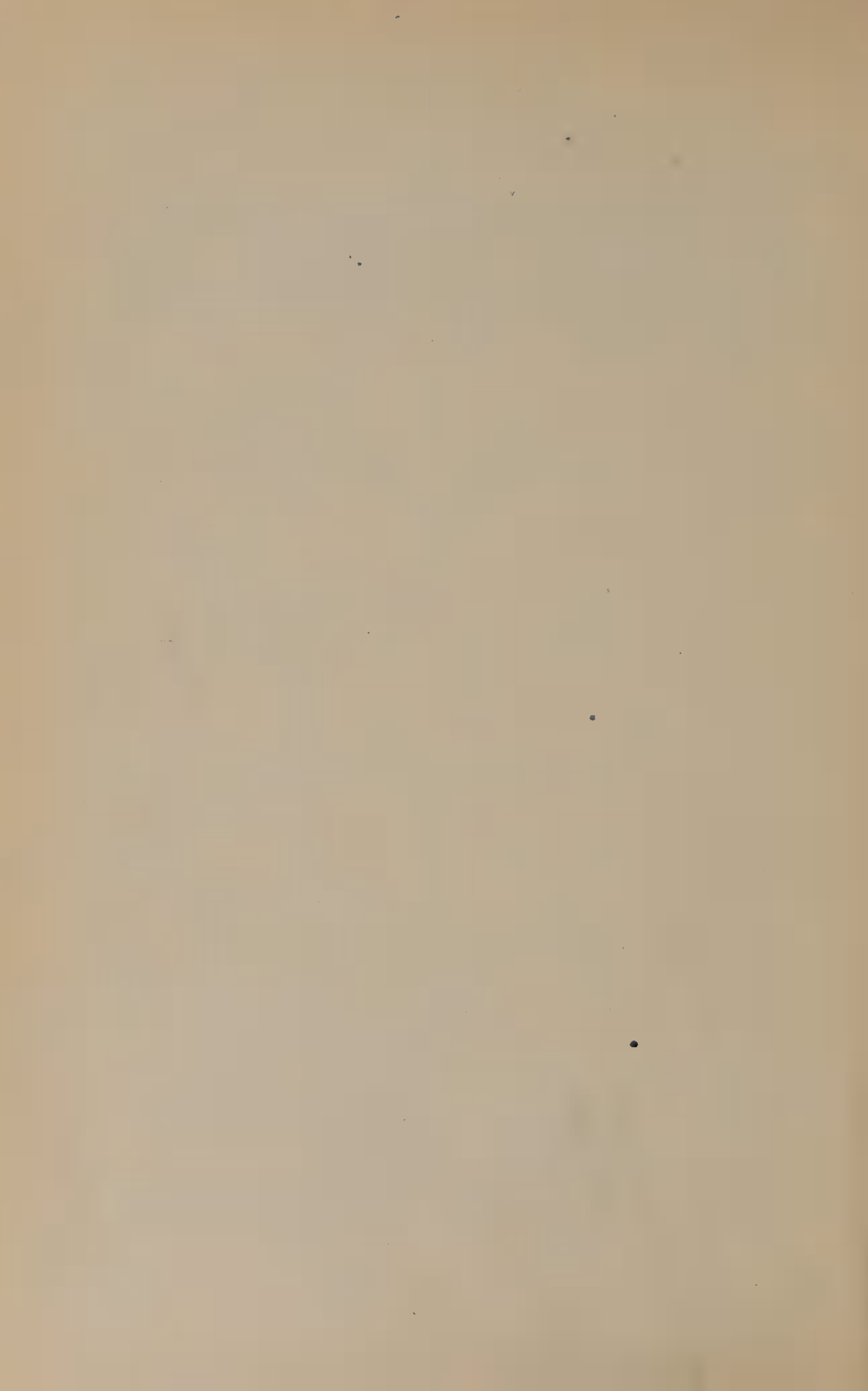
The authorship of the second Gospel is a simple matter. When complications and difficulties are found they are imported by some highly embellished theory of a modern critic. That the document could be pseudonymous is not supposable, for there is not enough prominence accorded to Mark in the literature of the Apostolic Age to lead subsequent Christian tradition to falsely subscribe his name to a book. That the book is in some way connected with John Mark is now almost universally admitted. There are some, however, who regard our present Greek Gospel as a very much revised and expanded edition of the original Mk., or, as the Germans call it, *Ur-Marcus*. This theory arises from the elaborate speculations of the critic rather than the necessities of scientific explanation. The most natural

theory is the one passed down to us by ancient tradition, appearing first in the writings of Papias (c. 125), who, reporting the testimony of "the Presbyter," says "Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote accurately whatever he remembered, not, however, recording in order the things that were said or done by Christ." No sufficient reason has yet been found for rejecting this testimony. It is supported by the corroboration of Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen, Eusebius, Epiphanius, and Jerome. The testimony of these witnesses varies as to many details, but agrees on two points, namely, that John Mark wrote the second Gospel and that his work was in some way closely connected with Peter.

With this view of ancient tradition the internal evidence agrees. We must necessarily infer from Ac. 12:12ff that Peter was from an early date intimately acquainted with Mark. Undoubted evidence of their close association in later years is presented in I Pt. 5:13. The Gospel itself bears traits of an eyewitness, as the majority of critics now agree. It gives a seemingly unconscious prominence to Peter. "The Gospel really begins with his call; it culminates in his confession; it closes with the message of the risen Lord to 'his disciples and to Peter'" (Dods, *Intro. to NT*, p. 27). Some portions of the Gospel suggest the peculiar *gigantesque* style exhibited by Peter in his addresses in Acts and his epistles (cf. Mk. 4:35ff). Many other traces of Petrine influence have been noted by NT scholars. We need have no fear in accepting the verdict of tradition that Mark wrote our second Gospel, basing it chiefly upon the tradition transmitted by Peter.

3. *Luke.*

The authorship of the third Gospel is interwoven with that of Acts, and the question as it applies to Acts is the better place to start for a solution. Hence we will defer the matter until we come to study the criticism of the book of Acts.



## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE FOURTH GOSPEL.

We have before us here what is without question the most hotly contested issue in the field of NT scholarship. There are two reasons for the rigid criticism to which this Gospel has been subjected. One is the theology of the book. It presents the most transcendent conception of the Person of Christ to be found in the NT scriptures. To account historically for this view of our Lord is a problem of vital and far-reaching consequences in modern Christian thought. It was this doctrinal import of the Gospel which led Bacon to say, "We agree . . . that the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel is the question of questions in all the domain of biblical science" (*Fourth Gos. in Research and Debate*, p. 3). But it is not this consideration alone which has accentuated the problem. We can but frankly admit that it is complicated by more difficulties than any other feature of NT study. It therefore behooves us to proceed with great caution and honesty, and not to be dogmatic in our conclusions.

There are three main problems involved in the criticism of the Fourth Gospel; the date, the author, and the historical value of the book as a source in the study of the Life of Jesus.

#### I. DATE.

With this matter we need not tarry long, for "the Modern Form of the Johannine Question scarcely concerns itself with the question of date" (Bacon, *Fourth*

*Gospel, etc.*, p. 21). It may now be regarded as an axiom of criticism that the thought and tradition presented in the Fourth Gospel represent Ephesian Christianity at or about the end of the first century A. D. Even Bacon admits that all question is removed that the "formative period" of the Fourth Gospel "has already been determined as closely as the data available, or likely to become available, admit. It is likely the close of the first century and opening decades of the second" (*Fourth Gospel*, p. 28f), and he presents no very cogent argument to prove that its "formative period" was not the time of its production by the author of our canonical Gospel. He nevertheless labors at great length to defend the theory, now held by many critics, that there existed in the last quarter of the first century a "Johannine tradition" which provided the substance of the Fourth Gospel, but was not necessarily reduced to writing until well into the second century. The more liberal of this group of scholars favor a date around 140 for the composition of our canonical Gospel, at least in its final form. To this view there are two serious objections.

(1) Concrete evidence that the Johannine tradition was not reduced to writing before the second quarter of the second century is wanting. That Christian literature prior to this date bears clear traces of the tradition is acknowledged by all, and so intricate and labored are the arguments to prove that these traces are not derived from the written Gospel as we have it that one grows impatient with the effort. We are certainly safe in claiming at least the absence of *concrete* evidence, for the proofs given for the late composition of the book are exceedingly complicated (cf. Schmiedel, *Johannine Writings*, pp. 170ff).

(2) The Fourth Gospel bears a stamp of unity and coherence not to be found even in the Synoptics. The entire Gospel is a development of the thesis posited in 1:1-18, and receives its character from the conception of Christ there expressed. Strauss was correct in comparing it to the seamless garment of our Lord. It is difficult to conceive of a body of oral tradition maintaining such a clearly defined scope and distinctive character for four decades in an intensely Hellenistic section. Were such a preservation of tradition ascribed to Jews in Palestine it would be entirely plausible, but for Greeks in Ephesus it is unthinkable.

But some contend that during this period the Gospel was being progressively reduced to writing, and reached final form about 140. Bacon, who is endowed with a peculiar genius for dissection, finds traces of three hands: a basic tradition, coming possibly from the Apostle John; a written report of this tradition, produced by the "Elder John," author of 1, 2 and 3 Jn.; and finally a redactor, who edited this apostolic material with numerous rearrangements and additions. This theory is not without evidential support, and, in varied form, has found other advocates (cf. especially A. E. Garvie, *The Beloved Disciple*). The Gospel does reflect several successive strata of tradition. But it would be practically impossible to conceive of a gospel produced at the end of the first century being otherwise. That its ultimate sources should retain many of the same characteristics exhibited in the Synoptic tradition was inevitable; and it is just as certain that it would have to submit to the effects of the tremendous influence of Paul's thinking; and the material must be finally cast in a mould determined by the doctrinal and philosophical agitations of Ephesian Christianity in the last two



decades of the first century. These different stages in the development of the tradition would most naturally reveal themselves in the final outcome, no matter who did the writing, and we would expect them to be most clearly defined if reduced to writing at about the end of the first century. At 140 they would have been so blended and veneered as to be indistinguishable.

A strong corroborative argument for the early date of the Gospel is offered in its style, which is exceedingly simple and unliterary, very different from the patristic writings. Its language is certainly of a decidedly Aramaic cast, for at least this much has been demonstrated by Prof. C. F. Burney's recent work on *The Aramaic Origin of the Fourth Gospel*. These phenomena best fit an early date.

The most reasonable theory, in the light of both internal and external evidence, is that the Fourth Gospel came into existence in its present form prior to A. D. 110. A more exact date must await the settlement of other questions.

## II. AUTHOR.

In the very beginning let us clear up our thinking at one important point. The authorship of the Fourth Gospel does not involve the doctrine of divine inspiration. The original text of the Gospel made no direct claim to have been written by the Apostle John. The effort to prove the book pseudepigraphic is wholly out of place, and cannot arise from unprejudiced motives. It is true that 19:35 intimates that the Gospel is based upon the testimony of an eyewitness, but does not state who this eyewitness was, or even that the eyewitness wrote the Gospel. The truth of this is demonstrated by the admirable force with which A. E. Garvie, in *The*

*Beloved Disciple*, defends the hypothesis that this eyewitness was a now unknown disciple of Jesus, and the author of the tradition contained in the Gospel, but not the evangelist himself. It is admitted now by practically all NT scholars that 20:24, which does contain an unmistakable ascription of authorship, was added by a later hand. Then what we may regard as the inspired text of the Gospel fails to designate the author, and hence we may discard all prepossessions and seek the conclusion to which cautious and conservative scientific investigation may lead.

We must bear in mind that in accounting for a gospel there are questions more important than the identity of the author and the sources of his material. The primary questions are: (1) What was the evident relation of the author to his sources? (2) Why did his gospel come to be generally received? In answer to the first question, it is evident that the fourth evangelist regarded himself as an authority on gospel tradition, and used it with great liberty. In fact, no other gospel bears so much the stamp of individuality. It is different from the Synoptic tradition; different from the evangelic tradition reflected in the other NT books and the Apostolic Fathers; different from the apocryphal gospels, which were based largely on the Synoptists. This fact indicates the problematic nature of the second question: How did this gospel come to be so widely received? While the apocryphal gospels, differing less from the Palestinian tradition, were summarily rejected from the developing canon, this one met but the slightest opposition. No hypothesis of authorship is adequate which ignores this fact. The Fourth Gospel was not written by an obscure Christian disciple, but by a leader of sufficient influence

to secure its universal recognition as an authentic gospel. Otherwise its reception cannot be accounted for.

Who was this eminent Christian leader? We seek the answer for this question in four groups of evidence.

(1) *The Later Tradition.* The great fourth century church historian, Eusebius, with a number of written sources before him which we do not have, accepted the prevalent tradition that the author of the Fourth Gospel was John the son of Zebedee. In this opinion he is supported by such other eminent writers as Origen, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Theophilus, Polycrates, Hippolytus and Irenæus. These writers represent practically the entire Christian world of that day, and with them we may combine the testimony of the Muratorian fragment. This evidence proves that by the last quarter of the second century the Fourth Gospel "was known and read through all the extent of Christendom, in churches varying in origin and language and history, in Lyons and Rome, in Carthage and Alexandria, in Athens and Corinth, in Ephesus and Sardis and Hierapolis, in Antioch and Edessa" (Watkins, *Bampton Lectures*, p. 47), and that it was so used because these churches believed it to have been written by the Apostle John.

We are confronted by a phenomenon of history. When any critic manifests a tendency to evade its force he forfeits his right to further consideration in this field. The spirit of true scientific investigation inquires, Why do we have this tradition? It is based on either invention, illusion or reality. What we know of the general character of early tradition (cf. p. 133) justifies an assumption in favor of its truth. Then our task is not so much one of finding out how abundant the evidence is

supporting it, as to see if there is any necessarily fatal evidence against it. In this attitude we approach the next group of evidence.

(2) *The Earlier Tradition.* We pass now beyond A. D. 175. Here we find no direct testimony as to the identity of the author, but one very significant bit of indirect evidence. The Alogoi, a group belonging to the third quarter of the second century, disputed the apostolic authorship (on doctrinal grounds), and ascribed the Gospel to Cerinthus, the first century Gnostic. This indicates two facts: (a) That there was a widespread belief that the Apostle John wrote the Gospel; (b) That the Alogoi regarded its composition as belonging to the first century. These inferences are obviously inevitable.

To this same period belongs Tatian's *Diatessaron*, which includes the text of the Fourth Gospel. This says nothing final as to the author, but does prove the high standing of the book, placing it on a par with the Synoptics. It is fairly certain that Tatian would not have ventured such a procedure had it been an innovation: the Gospel had been accepted as authentic prior to his day. He also made use of the Gospel in his "Address to the Greeks."

Beyond 150 the reflections of the Gospel are infrequent. Some traces of its language and thought, however, there are, unquestionably. But many critics quite easily dispose of these reflections by this sort of argument: It is possible that they were derived from other sources; therefore they did not arise from the Fourth Gospel. One of the most enthusiastic advocates of this deletion process is Prof. B. W. Bacon, who goes carefully over the literature of this entire period and gags

every witness, then turns and marvels at the "silence." Having adopted the juristic axiom of regarding the later tradition as true until it is proven false, we proceed to investigate this literature to discern if there are reflections of thought and language which may be reasonably traced to the Fourth Gospel. If such there be we have found no reason thus far for disputing the tradition.

The moot question of all this period is in Justin Martyr (c. 145). Defenders of the apostolic authorship are quite positive that he employs the Fourth Gospel, while objectors are just as certain that he knew nothing of it. When we consider that he was only two decades prior to Tatian's *Diatessaron* we are compelled to regard it as at least probable that he knew the Gospel, though this creates no necessary assumption that he used it. The position taken by some that Justin did not know the Gospel because it came into existence at or about his own time is scarcely tenable, because on this hypothesis it would be difficult to account for it taking a place, within two decades, alongside the Synoptics, especially when the claims of new gospels were already most likely coming to be regarded with considerable suspicion. Every probability is in favor of Justin being acquainted with the Gospel; are there traces of its use in his writings?

He refers to the Gospels collectively as "Memoirs composed by the apostles of Christ and those who followed with them." Since he expresses his opinion in another place that Mark contained the "Memoirs of Peter," it might be that the "apostles" referred to were Matthew and Peter, but under this explanation what are we to do with the plural of "those who followed with them"? This leaves of the Synoptists only Luke, and if

he alone were in mind, why the plural "those"? If he knew the Fourth Gospel, then we may refer "apostles" to Matthew and John, and "those etc." to Mark and Luke. Though this proves nothing, it harmonizes best with the traditional view. A much more important evidence is Justin's conception of the Messiah as incarnate deity, described under the term *logos* (word), and his description of this *logos* as "made flesh" (*Ap.* 32), declaring that "through him God created all things" (*Dial.* 56). He says further, "For that he was the only-begotten of the Father of the universe, having been begotten by Him in a peculiar manner as His Logos and Power, and having afterward become man through the Virgin, as we have learned from the Memoirs" (*Dial.* 105). The Messiah's incarnation by virgin birth is of course traceable to Mt. and Lk., but from what book of "Memoirs" does he derive the Logos conception? There seems to be but one plausible answer. He got it from John. In his First Apology, ch. 61, we find, "For Christ also said, Except ye be born again, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of heaven." It is difficult to understand the motive of one who labors to prove that these words bear no relation to the Fourth Gospel. It is true that the Greek differs slightly from that in the third chapter of John, but it is a well-known fact that all patristic writers were inexact in their quotation of scripture. Besides these very clear traces there are numerous other very probably reflections in Justin of Johannine language and ideas. Ezra Abbot finds 16 (cf. *Authorship of Fourth Gospel*, pp. 45ff). Unless one starts out to see if he can eliminate all trace of the Fourth Gospel from early Christian literature, he is convinced by an examination of Justin's writings that



he knew and used it, with a probability in favor of his regarding it as the work of the son of Zebedee.

We may now but briefly notice the reflections prior to Justin.

*Basilides* (c. A. D. 125): That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world (cit. Hippolytus, *Philos.* 7:22; cf. Jn. 1:9).

*Ignatius* (c. A. D. 107): Unless a man be within the sanctuary he lacks the bread of God (Eph. 5:2; cf. Jn. 6:33). As then the Lord was united to the Father and did nothing without Him (Mag. 7:1; cf. Jn. 5:19). I desire the bread of God, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ, . . . and for drink I desire his blood (Rom. 7:3; cf. Jn. 6:33). The Spirit knoweth whence it cometh and whither it goeth (Phil. 7:1; cf. Jn. 3:8).

*Polycarp* (c. A. D. 107): He promised us to raise us from the dead (Phil. 5:20; cf. Jn. 5:21). For every one who does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, he is anti-Christ (Phil. 7:1; cf. 1 Jn. 4:2).

The last citation is a reflection of the First Epistle rather than the Fourth Gospel, but since there is an undoubted literary relation between them the evidence is in point. The cumulative impression of all these evidences is very forceful. One is left wondering why such assiduous attempts should be made to suppress their testimony. The earlier tradition certainly does not at any point contradict the later tradition, but rather strengthens its witness in favor of the apostolic authorship.

An early reflection of the Fourth Gospel which has been entirely neglected by practically all critics is brought to our attention by Sanday (*Crit. of Fourth*



*Gospel*, p. 241). It is in the conclusion to Mark's Gospel. The dependence of this passage upon the Fourth Gospel Sanday takes for granted, and thinks that its date must surely be placed prior to 140.

The objection which the opposition regards as finally fatal to the traditional theory is that the Apostle John never lived in Ephesus, but suffered martyrdom long before the end of the first century. That the great bulk of early tradition favors his residence in Ephesus far up toward A. D. 100 is not to be denied, but some ancient testimony is found which conflicts with this.

The proof for this early martyrdom of the Apostle John is derived from three sources (cf. Moffatt, *Intro. to Lit. of NT*, 602ff).

(a) The first is the prophecy of Jesus recorded in Mk. 10:39 and Mt. 20:23 that the two sons of Zebedee should drink of his "cup" and partake of his "baptism." The theory that this prediction requires the early martyrdom of John is based upon two assumptions. The first is that its literal fulfillment could only be realized in the actual death of these two apostles at the hands of the enemies of Christianity. The second is that the prophecy would have been removed from the text of the Gospels had it not received this literal fulfillment. We cannot refrain from asking, How about Mt. 16:28?

(b) There is a testimony contained in the writings of one Georgios Hamartolos, a ninth century writer, to the effect that Papias bore witness to the martyrdom of John at the hands of the Jews, which testimony the said Georgios offers to support his own literalistic interpretation of Mk. 10:39. But this evidence of Georgios finds corroboration in the writings of a certain Philip Sidetes of the fifth century; though, unfortunately, the latter's quotation of Papias is admittedly faulty, since it repre-

sents Papias as employing a term which "is known not to have been applied to John earlier than the close of the fourth century" (Moffatt, *Intro.*, p. 604). These bits of remote evidence do make it quite probable that Papias called attention to the fulfillment, in some mode, of this prediction of Jesus, but we are confessedly reluctant to set aside a consistent stream of tradition from Irenæus (second century) on, witnessed by some of the most reliable of patristic writers, and substitute this testimony which is rather late and offers no witness who is above suspicion. While perhaps (?) "there does not appear to be any particularly strong ground for the rejection of this supposed 'Papias tradition'" (Moffatt, *Intro.*, p. 605), we fail to discern the "particularly strong ground" for accepting it.

(c) The third source of evidence may be found in an ancient church calendar, which prescribes the commemoration of the martyrdom of James and John on the same day, though even here a difficulty in the text meets us (cf. Moffatt, *Intro.*, p. 605, foot-note). This bit of evidence pleads its own merits; it needs no comment.

We are asked to set aside the great mass of early Christian tradition, which ascribes to John residence in Ephesus till near the close of the first century, and substitute a theory based upon the proof here reviewed.

But we should not pass without acknowledging some further proof offered by Prof. Bacon. He succeeds with remarkable ingenuity in finding several obscure crevices in the Synoptic tradition, and even one in Revelation, through which he can read into the NT a confirmation of this theory (cf. *Fourth Gospel*, pp. 135ff). But these complicated inferences, while they excite our admiration for the genius of the author, are not so con-

vincing to the rest of us as they are to Prof. Bacon. This impression, however, he anticipates, for he suspects that "Their cogency will doubtless be variously judged" (ib. 144).

We may note further that the tradition for the martyrdom of James and John appears much later than the tradition for the apostolic authorship of the Fourth Gospel. There is not found a single reference to it from Papias to Philip of Side, a period of approximately three hundred years. How may we account for the remarkable "silence" for three centuries on so important a point of apostolic history? Such a tradition must have been unknown to Clement of Rome, else he would have grouped John with Peter and Paul when he referred to their martyrdom in I Clement v. The tradition appears to associate the two brothers as martyrs on a common occasion, in utter disregard of Acts 12 and Gal. 2. This theory is indeed a problematic solution of the problem of the Fourth Gospel.

(3) *Contemporaneous Literature.* There are other first century documents which throw light on the probable origin of the Fourth Gospel. None of these is of greater interest than the second and third Epistles of John. Many of the best scholars, especially those who are most proficient in the original language of the NT, now contend that these Epistles were penned by the same hand that wrote the Fourth Gospel. Their decided similarity in style is clear to the novice; it takes a very keen scholar to discover the differences. The safe and conservative theory is that all three books came from the same author.

But why were II and III John ever preserved, and why elevated to a position in the NT canon? It could

not have been by reason of any important doctrinal element, because they do not contain such. Indeed, their lack of an outstanding doctrinal point kept them in obscurity for many decades. In size they were mere scraps, personal notes, written (as Rendel Harris thinks) on a single sheet of papyrus. They are of immense historical and critical interest to us, but the matters which attach to them importance in our eyes were of no concern to early Christianity. The fact that they survived can only be explained by supposing that they came from the pen of a Christian leader of tremendous influence. If we suppose that they came from the pen of the last surviving Apostle, we have made the explanation of their preservation easy.

Points of likeness are obvious between the Fourth Gospel and Col. and Eph. We waive for the present the question of the authorship of these two epistles; whether Paul wrote them or not, they reflect the reaction of the same type of thought found in the Fourth Gospel. They also present a similar view of the Person of Christ. Indeed, the theology of the Fourth Gospel has been not incorrectly described as "Advanced Paulinism." No cautious critic would now deny that these books are relatively near together in date of origin and represent the same theological atmosphere. This fact has been urged by some as unfavorable to the apostolic authorship of the Gospel and Epistles alike. But let us see if this view necessarily results. If Col. and Eph. were written by Paul to churches in Asia we would expect them to reflect the problems of Christian thought prevalent in that region. Thirty years later we should expect considerable development in these thought tendencies. This exactly fits what we find in the Fourth Gospel, for both liberals and conservatives observe that

it represents an advanced Paulinism. But whether written by Paul or not, Eph. and Col. were certainly written before the end of the first century. Thus their relation to the Fourth Gospel favors an early date for the latter, and helps that far to make possible its apostolic authorship.

An interesting suggestion has recently been offered by W. H. Rigg in the London *Expositor* (March, 1924) that evidence from I Peter favors the apostolic authorship of the Fourth Gospel. While these writings are undoubtedly widely separated in type of thought, yet I Pet. does throw important light on the problem of the Fourth Gospel. We will note three of the points of evidence suggested by Rigg. The first is that since I Peter and the Fourth Gospel both reflect the mighty influence of Paul's mind, those who accept the apostolic authorship of the former (and the great majority of scholars do) should not find this Pauline influence a difficulty in the way of believing that an apostle wrote the latter. A second difficulty which I Peter helps to remove is the influence of Philo over the Fourth Gospel. It is held by many able scholars that traces of Philonism may be found in I Pet., and if Philo's conceptions could affect the one apostle, there is no reason for supposing that they could not also affect the other. The most important evidence to which Mr. Rigg calls our attention is Peter's apparent dependence upon some source other than Paul for many of his most prominent ideas, such as regeneration, partaking of spiritual food—which is evidently Christ, and representing Jesus as the great Shepherd. Peter presents these ideas in a way which makes it clear that he did not derive them from Paul. The most plausible explanation is that he got them directly from the teaching of his divine Master. The Fourth



Gospel gives prominence to the same ideas, and hence may well have been written by an apostle who heard of these matters from the lips of Jesus. "If one of the original Twelve could write a letter taking for granted Regeneration, union with Christ, and a Christology ranging from the Lord's pre-existence to His present intimate care for His suffering people, and whose love extends not only to those who came after Him, but also to the generations of men who preceded His coming (I Pt. 3:19; 4:6), it is well for us not to close our minds to the possibility that another disciple should, a quarter of a century later, produce such a work as we now possess in the Fourth Gospel, in which these truths are expanded and emphasized" (*op. cit.*).

(4) *Evidences in the Gospel Itself.* The tradition of apostolic authorship finds abundant support from internal evidence. In this we may include that most ancient attestation to its authorship, chapter 21, verse 24: "This is the disciple that beareth witness of these things, and wrote these things, and we know that his witness is true." From the context it is clear that "the disciple" here referred to was "the disciple whom Jesus loved," and the beloved disciple is thought by most scholars to have been the Apostle John (see *per contra* especially Garvie, *The Beloved Disciple*). This testimony is undoubtedly nearly as ancient as the Gospel itself, and while it cannot be cited with absolute certainty as a testimony to the apostolic authorship, it is at least direct evidence that the author was an eyewitness. With this may be compared 19:35: "And he that hath seen hath borne witness and his witness is true, and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye may believe." This verse is probably the author's own claim to being an eyewitness. We may

note further in this connection 1:14: "And the word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory." The words "we beheld his glory" are especially valuable evidence, since they appear to be a perfectly unintentional intimation that the author was an eyewitness. This testimony finds an interesting parallel in I Jn. 1:1ff. Some of us cannot escape the conviction that the same hand wrote both passages.

Besides these direct attestations to the author's character as an eyewitness there are many indirect proofs. These we have not space to offer here. (The best brief summary may be found in Burton, *Short Intro. to Gospels*, pp. 110ff).

This eyewitness was a Palestinian Jew. His quite evident familiarity with Jewish ideas, customs and traits can best be accounted for on this view. He shows a knowledge of Palestinian geography which could not have been derived second hand. There is a marked Aramaic element in his style. This point could now scarcely be disputed by one who has even hurriedly surveyed the evidence collected by Burney in his recent work, *The Aramaic Origin of the Fourth Gospel* (Oxford, 1922). The author's objective manner of referring to "the Jews" as though he were contemplating a foreign nationality was formerly urged against this theory, but this phenomenon may be reasonably accounted for by his long residence in a Gentile environment and contact with Gentile Christianity.

Thus we see that it may be reasonably demonstrated that the author of the Fourth Gospel was an eyewitness and a Palestinian Jew, but this is as far as internal evidence can carry us in actual proof. The author's evident intimacy with Jesus and detailed knowledge of many matters in his ministry are in harmony with the tradition



for apostolic authorship, but do not furnish real proof (cf. Peake, *NT Intro.*, pp. 209f). But we have answered the question which is of really greatest interest to us: Is the internal evidence in harmony with the tradition? We may safely accept an affirmative. (But see *per contra*, Bacon and Schmiedel.)

### III. HISTORICITY.

Since the days of Reimarus Biblical critics have battled over the question of the historical trustworthiness of the Fourth Gospel. Adverse opinion grew steadily through three quarters of the nineteenth century, but the last fifty years have brought the Gospel into better standing at this point. That the Fourth Gospel is merely history no one now pretends; nor is it as distinctly historical as the Synoptics; but to declare it as unreliable in the history which it does present is a different matter. That is to say, the point at issue now is not as to whether it is merely history, but whether the historical framework upon which it is constructed is trustworthy.

The fact which has raised the question as to the historicity of the Fourth Gospel is its obvious difference from the Synoptics. These differences no one can successfully deny. They have been magnified and multiplied by radical scholars far beyond their true proportions (cf. Schmiedel, *Jhn. Writings*, pp. 9-46), but some real differences there are, such as the scene and duration of Jesus' ministry, the representation of the Person of Christ, and the nature of Jesus' discourses, with other minor differences.

Then as between the Synoptic Gospels and the Fourth Gospel we find undoubtedly great divergences. As to how we shall deal with them there are two alternative

methods. We may seek to demonstrate how utterly contradictory and irreconcilable these differences are; or, we may diligently inquire after a solution which will offer reasonable harmony. The choice of the method depends largely upon the motive and objective of the critic. If he has set out to see how far he can prove traditional Christianity untenable, he will select the former method; if he desires as far as possible to conserve its values for the race, he will choose the latter.

We have taken a great step toward the solution of our problem when we bring ourselves into sympathy with the purpose of the author. His task was not the mere recording of sober history; he wished to appeal to conscience and judgment, and to refute error. He had a strong apologetic purpose, and a polemical one as well (cf. E. F. Scott, *Fourth Gospel*, pp. 65-103). To some the fact of this doctrinal impulse is in itself enough to impeach the historical character of the book, for they assume that a doctrinal interest of necessity renders one incompetent as a historian. This view prevails especially among German critics. The one great defect of German criticism in the Gospels is that it demands of the primitive evangelists that they write history in exact accord with modern German standards. The intensely literalistic and technical minds of these scholars are unable to adapt themselves to the point of view of the primitive Christian writer. Germany is rich in technical learning, but utterly impoverished in historical imagination. Yet they talk much about the "historical sense," but this means to them the criterion by which the German judges history, and without which he will accept nothing as historically valid. The author of the Fourth Gospel was certainly not a historian of this mold, and thought it no crime to weave history

with the living threads of an exultant faith in his transcendent Lord, without concerning himself with keeping always perfectly manifest the distinction between the reflective and the historical. In fact, he was not nearly so much concerned about the demands of the modern scientific mind as he was about the needs of the first century Christian soul. The only court of criticism to which he was amenable was accepted apostolic tradition. The employment of original fabrication would have utterly defeated his purpose, for the knowledge of the evangelic tradition was so well fixed and widely known that anything really contradictory to it would have been rejected without consideration. We may naturally suppose that the seeming discrepancies of the Fourth Gospel have an explanation. Our task is to seek it.

The necessary limits of this discussion prohibit a detailed examination of these problems. As much as we can do is to indicate the directions in which possible solutions lie. (The best full discussion of these matters may be found in Sanday, *Crit. of Fourth Gos.*, pp. 142-184).

(1) *Scene of the Ministry.* According to the Synoptic Gospels Jesus spent the major portion of his ministry in Galilee. John represents it as being devoted largely to Jerusalem. At first glance this appears to be a hopeless contradiction, but close examination has led even many liberals to acknowledge that it is not necessarily so. The fundamental question is, does John represent anything as occurring in Jerusalem which the Synoptics place in Galilee? To this we may offer an unchallenged negative. On the contrary, the narratives coincide at many points, and where they do the geographical

location of the events is the same (e. g., Jn. 6:1ff—Mt. 14:13ff—Mk. 5:30ff—Lk. 9:10ff; Jn. 6:16ff—Mt. 14:24ff—Mk. 6:47ff; Jn. 12:12ff—Mt. 21:1ff—Mk. 11:1ff—Lk. 19:29ff; Jn. 12:2ff—Mt. 26:6ff—Mk. 14:3ff). There is therefore no reason for denying on the basis of the Synoptics that everything happened in Judea which John represents as happening there. For some reason John was more interested in the relation of the Lord's ministry to Jerusalem, the Synoptics in the relation of his ministry to Galilee.

(2) *Duration of the Ministry.* If we had been left with the Synoptic Gospels alone we might well have concluded that the ministry of Jesus extended over not more than a year, but in accordance with John's Gospel we must assign at least two years, and probably three, as the period of its duration. But the fact is, the Synoptics offer very few chronological data, and leave us perfectly free to accept John's chronology. Hence there appears not the slightest vestige of contradiction here. Nothing but an intense prejudice against traditionalism could lead one to say, "If we are bent on discovering, by means of a calculation which is quite uncertain, how long the public ministry of Jesus is supposed to have lasted, we shall hardly find that it lasted more than a year;" especially when the same writer has admitted at the beginning of the same paragraph that the Synoptics "do not allow us to fix its duration" (Schmiedel, *Jhn. Writings*, p. 10). The Synoptics do not fix, even approximately, the length of our Lord's ministry; John does. Where lies the contradiction?

(3) *Representation of the Person of Christ.* The Fourth Gospel advances well beyond the Synoptics in its view of the transcendence of Christ. The conception

which it reflects, however, has been exaggerated by reading back into it the development of later Christian theology. The "metaphysical" nature of its christology is largely assumption. Though there is presented in the Prologue a theory of the Person of Christ which ascribes to Him essential deity and pre-existence, it is not employed as a part of a metaphysical system of religious philosophy, but for the practical purpose of refuting error and evoking faith. The same point of view prevails throughout the Gospel.

There does appear a development in the view of the Person of Christ from the earliest Synoptic tradition through the writings of Paul, and Hebrews, reaching its climax in the Fourth Gospel; but the question is, Is this a progressive invention or a progressive interpretation? The answer lies in that which may be demonstrated as historically true about Jesus. If the developed view is a fuller and more adequate explanation of the historical Jesus, then we may accept it as an interpretation. If Jesus of Nazareth was merely a Jewish reformer of remarkable human traits, then the Johannine view is an invention—but so also is the Synoptic view, which likewise represents Jesus as a supernatural Messiah. The fact is that the earliest Synoptic tradition contains the germs for all the later development in the view of the Person of Christ (cf. A. T. Robertson, *The Christ of the Logia*, pp. 15-103).

We may accept it as certain that John the son of Zebedee, as he followed Jesus of Nazareth through his journeyings about Palestine, did not see him as the Fourth Gospel sees him, but is it not just as certain that John did not see Jesus, while he companied with him in Palestine, as he saw him after the mature years of an intense Christian experience? There is no ques-

tion that, even if the Apostle wrote the Gospel, the phenomena of his highly developed Christian consciousness would color his view of the Master. He saw him then, as he gazed in rapturous love upon him across sixty-five years of sacred Christian experiences, in a far different light from that in which he beheld him when he desired that Jesus should call down a curse upon the inhospitable Samaritans. Yet the Gospel does reflect a sense of the essentially human in Jesus, many critics to the contrary notwithstanding. Even in the Prologue (1:14) the author declares that "the word became flesh and tabernacled among us." This undoubtedly contemplates the Messiah's real participation in the ordinary lot of mankind, even though the very next breath of the evangelist adds that in the midst of this ordinary human experience they still were able to witness his divine glory. Christ is represented as coming to a decision in the ordinary human way (1:43), as becoming guest at a wedding supper (2:1ff), as growing weary, thirsty and hungry (4:6ff), as discerning as any other human the significance of a situation (6:15), as manifesting genuine grief (11:33ff), and numerous other reflections of humanity.

It is interesting to find Bacon observing how the Fourth Gospel "supplements the triple tradition with invaluable historical data" (*NT Intro.*, p. 265). But this admission should really not be surprising, for any save a mind blinded with prejudice can perceive this fact. The record of the early meeting of Jesus with some of his disciples as recorded in Jn. 1:35ff is the best explanation of their readiness to follow him at his call as recorded in the Synoptic Gospels. The intense hostility on the part of the Pharisees which occurs so



soon in Mark is best accounted for in the records of John's Judean ministry. The attitude toward Jesus on the part of the rulers in Jerusalem when he went to the last Passover is explained by his frequent contact with the city as recorded by John alone. John's representation of the length of the ministry as in excess of two years is regarded by the great majority of scholars as a valuable supplement to the Synoptic tradition.

(4) *Nature of the Discourses.* The style of the reported teachings of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel is more like that of I John than it is like that of the sayings of Jesus in the Synoptics. This is a simple and undeniable fact, and may at first appear startling, but upon a moment's reflection we will recall that in even the Synoptic Gospels what we have is not the original words of Jesus, but a translation of them. Jesus taught in Aramaic and all our Gospels are in Greek. Then what we have is the *sense* of Jesus' teaching and not his own phraseology—which is not to be especially deplored. However, it is likely that the Synoptic Gospels do very closely approximate the individual style of Jesus, while John gives us the teaching of Jesus as interpreted to him by his own experience. Thereby the Fourth Gospel conveys to us the deep spiritual import of the messages of our Lord in a way not possible in a more exact reproduction of his literal language.

The greatest reason for the objection to the historicity of the Fourth Gospel is a prepossession against the miraculous. We are ready to admit that if there is no such thing as the supernatural, John is the least historical of the Gospels. It surrounds the whole life of Jesus with a supernatural atmosphere.



## CONCLUSIONS.

All conclusions in the realm of criticism must be held as tentative. Dogmatics is a necessity of theology, but an impossibility in criticism. We do not therefore pretend to offer here anything in the nature of demonstrated finality, though one may of right hold the *opinion* that some of the conclusions suggested are in reality demonstrated and final. We group our conclusions under two heads, *assured results*, or those matters which we may regard as settled in so far as the data of criticism now in our possession permit, and *reasonable probabilities*, matters which are still more or less problematic, but which appear to have the balance of evidence in their favor.

1. *Assured Results.*

(1) *The Fourth Gospel employs the forms of Hellenistic thought.* A comparison of John's ideas with those prevalent in the Greek world of his day reveals a clear similarity. Of course we could not conceive of it being otherwise, for John could not address himself to those about him in thought forms other than those with which they were familiar. He took those thought forms and put into them a Christian content, finding in them an excellent means for the expression of some of the highest elements of Christian truth.

(2) *The Fourth Gospel is reflective and argumentative rather than historical.* This, however, does not make it necessary for us to regard it as unhistorical. Though history was not its primary aim, the history which it does employ is not therefore unreliable.

(3) *All the material in the book bears the stamp of the author's personality and style.* We have seen above

that the discourse material reflects John's style rather than that which, considering the Synoptic Gospels, we may call the individual style of Jesus. Likewise the prologue reflects the same individuality seen in the rest of the Gospel. However, in deference to prevalent critical opinion, we should make an exception of chapter 21, which is widely regarded by both liberals and conservatives as an appendix, though the complacency of this opinion should be somewhat disturbed when the acknowledged greatest New Testament Greek scholar on earth observes, "It is quite beyond my knowledge of Greek to see a sharp distinction in style between this famous chapter and the other twenty chapters." While he admits that "Appendix it may be," yet he thinks "it is surely by the same hand that wrote the rest of the book" (A. T. Robertson in the *Biblical Review*, Jan., 1924, p. 70). We make an exception of this chapter purely for the reason that in the light of past criticism its relation to the rest of the book can not be called an assured result, for it is our own opinion that eventually it will come to be regarded as, through verse 23, an inseparable part of this "seamless robe."

## 2. *Reasonable Probabilities.*

(1) *The Gospel was written prior to 100 A. D., or certainly less than a decade after.* The position taken here is that it was written about 95, but this is based on acceptance of the apostolic authorship. We may waive the question of the author and still place the approximate date at 100.

(2) *The Gospel was written by the Apostle John.* Our examination of all the evidences reviewed in the foregoing pages has convinced us that this may stand as

a reasonable probability. Though in our own mind there is great assurance on this point, we will not claim more than reasonable probability, because the question is still involved in several unsolved problems. We have demonstrated the fact that there is much which favors the tradition of John the son of Zebedee as author, but critical fairness requires that we acknowledge that there are difficulties still in the way. There are three problems which must be solved before we can speak with final assurance.

*a.* There are remarkably slight traces of the Fourth Gospel and of the personal influence of John in the Christian writers prior to 150. Traces there are, but not so abundant as we would normally expect. This is frankly a difficulty in the way of the theory of apostolic authorship, but it is also true that sound, rational explanations have been offered. When we shall have arrived at a generally accepted explanation the difficulty may be accounted as removed.

*b.* The problem of authorship is unavoidably involved in an enigmatic statement of Papias, "But whenever anyone came who had enjoyed intercourse with the elders, I inquired about the sayings of the elders, what Andrew or Peter said, or what Philip or what Thomas or James or what John or Matthew or any other of the disciples of the Lord said, and what Aristion and John the Elder, the disciples of the Lord say." He mentions the name John twice, and seems to distinguish a second one known as "John the Elder." Was there living at Ephesus near the end of the first century a great Christian leader, an eyewitness of the ministry of Jesus, known as John the Elder? This is a difficult problem, still remaining unsettled, and having an undeniable bearing upon the authorship of the Fourth Gos-

pel. Many liberals and some conservatives think that the Gospel was composed by this "John the Elder," who was also "The Elder" of 2 and 3 Jn., and the author as well of I John, and that his name became confused in Christian tradition with that of the Apostle, who wrote Revelation. We are not able to deny the plausibility of this theory.

*c.* It seems not to be possible to identify with absolute finality "the beloved disciple" with the Apostle John. If this could be done, then two alternatives would be forced upon the critic: to assume pseudonymity or apostolic authorship, and the majority would likely take the latter course.

*d.* The style, vocabulary and theology of Rev. and the Fourth Gospel are different, and tradition ascribes them to the same author. Detailed treatment of this problem comes up later, but critical honesty demands that it be mentioned here as an acknowledged difficulty.

With these problems still awaiting a generally satisfactory solution we must leave the authorship of the Fourth Gospel as an open question, declaring ourselves as feeling safe with the light we do have in being confident that it was written by the hand of the last great Apostle, John the son of Zebedee. However the matter may be finally settled, surely the eternal spiritual values of this great interpretation of Jesus must remain undiminished. To the end of time the religious instincts of humanity will joyously respond to its transcendent conception of God as revealing Himself through the medium of human flesh in the blessed divine Person of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### JESUS IN CRITICISM.

The critical study of the life and person of our Lord, as we consider it in its present stage, is not without its encouraging aspects. Three matters in particular we may note. (1) For one thing, present criticism at this point is far more sober and unbiased than it was a half century ago, as our review of its history in a previous chapter disclosed. (2) There is now on the part of liberal criticism a frank and even enthusiastic recognition of the moral and religious values residing in Jesus and his teaching. That he accomplished a unique and marvelously helpful mission is now not denied. (3) For this reason criticism is now characterized by a profound and sincere reverence for Jesus. The vicious antagonism of a Reimarus, the apathetic scrutiny of a Strauss, or the careless art of a Renan finds little place in the present day critical investigation of the Life of Christ. With bared head and reverent heart the representative critic of today enters this field as a sacred realm, hallowed by the tenderest and worthiest impulses of the soul of man. "No age has ever given to Jesus more intelligent and sincere homage than is being rendered by the present" (Gilbert, *Jesus*, p. 255).

We may organize our discussion around five major problems, as follows: the historicity of Jesus, his Virgin Birth, his Messianic consciousness, the supernatural in his ministry, and his Resurrection.

## I. HISTORICITY.

To ask if Jesus was a real historical personage seems to the evangelical student to be utterly out of place, if not repulsively irreverent; but let it be remembered that we are studying Jesus *in criticism*, and criticism probes to the heart of reality. Whether it pleases us or not, the fact is that criticism has raised the question, and our task here is to see what the outcome has been. In fact, the genius of Christianity for seeking truth prevents it from shielding even the person of its Lord from the most acute investigation. We shall welcome criticism in any realm.

But when we come to the question of the historical reality of Jesus we are upon almost uncontested ground. Some indeed there have been who denied that he ever lived, but their number has been few and their arguments signally disproved. The present state of the problem may be discerned in the fact that the most able defense of the historicity of Jesus which has appeared in English was produced by one of the most extremely liberal scholars upon the American continent: Prof. Shirley Jackson Case of the University of Chicago (*The Historicity of Jesus*, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1912). While there is in his book much that departs far from the evangelical view, his argument for the historical reality of Jesus is conclusive. It is true that his first chapter strips the Master of so much ascribed to him by the Gospels that his historical Jesus is left in a rather dim and uncertain light, but he is nevertheless there. The theory of the "Christ-myth" is shown by Prof. Case to have arisen from the extreme measures and acute prejudice of a radical criticism which manipulates the data in accord with its own



fanciful reconstructions. This attack on tradition was not, strange to say, met by traditionalists, but chiefly by liberals. Be it said to the credit of the liberal criticism of Germany, it asserted itself with prompt decision against this unreasonable error.

The method of those who deny the historicity of Jesus is first to dispose of the literary testimony presented in the NT. Paul's writings they regard as wholly spurious, invented by second century Christianity and ascribed to a hero, who is himself probably a mythical figure. The Gospels represent a compound of heathen myths, and the rest of the NT literature is a development of the fiction contained in them.

In accounting for the origin of Christianity these critics offer the theory of a pre-Christian deity, invented by a sect of Jews, presenting a combination of Gentile savior-god myths and a Joshua-myth of the Jews. Since Joshua meant in the Hebrew tongue "deliverer," and was transliterated into Greek as Jesus, they claim linguistic grounds for the theory. In support of this hypothesis they find a confused and highly presumptive passage in Epiphanius, read an utterly foreign meaning into a passage in Hippolytus, and patch together a few fragments from other sources. On the basis of this evidence they set aside the vast array of data bequeathed to us in the NT and early Christian literature, declaring it all to be false, and Christ to be a creature of religious fancy. Until the advocates of this view "can offer more valid reasons for their skepticism, and can make the constructive presentation of their hypothesis agree more closely with all the data in the field of primitive Christian history, they can scarcely hope to find a substantial following" (Case, *Historicity of Jesus*, p. 133).

Over against these subjective and obviously inade-



quate arguments we may place a brief summary of the vast abundance of evidence which favors the literal historical existence of Jesus. It comes in two groups, the evidence of the NT, and the extra-Biblical testimony.

1. *The Evidence of the NT.* We may start with the little Epistle to Philemon. One is certainly devoid of all historical imagination who conceives of this bit of non-doctrinal, personal correspondence as being fabricated with a view to advancing the interests of a new religious cult. It may be proposed that it was written to glorify the legendary hero Paul, but we reply that there is nothing in the epistle which could serve this purpose, for, while the attitude of heart toward a distressed and outcast fellow-human—though a slave—impresses us profoundly with its high ethical import, this very thing would be offensive to the Græco-Roman mind, for to sponsor the cause of a runaway slave would then have been regarded as dangerously reactionary. The only account of Philemon which can lay any claim to reason is that it is genuine. This opens the way for the acceptance of the historicity of Paul. Then if Paul really lived in the first century, we have every reason to believe that he wrote other epistles. Many of those ascribed to him represent personal connections and communications unthinkable in a fictitious product of an ancient mind. And when we compare all these epistles there appears before us a historical situation whose vivid realism simply could not have been invented. But all this literature from the pen of Paul presupposes, takes for granted, the very recent existence of a person named Jesus. If Jesus did not live, then Paul and his literature are a hopeless enigma. This evidence from Paul is

further corroborated by the rest of the NT, especially the Gospels. They simply fill out in greater detail the historical portrait which Paul has already sketched. The most convincing array of historical evidence to be found in ancient literature is presented by the combined, though varied, testimony of our 27 NT books.

2. *Extra-Biblical Testimony.* We are not confined to the NT for our evidence of the historicity of Jesus. Many references in ancient non-Christian literature support the testimony of the Christian scriptures. There is a passage in Josephus which, though likely modified by Christian glosses, undoubtedly represents some original mention by that writer of Christ. Tacitus refers in quite specific terms to his death at the hands of Pilate. The reference of Suetonius to one "Chrestus" is thought to be simply a mistake for "Christus." A letter from Pliny, a Roman officer in Bithynia, written to Trajan about 112 A. D., asks for advice in dealing with the Christian sect. This letter witnesses to the size and tenacity of the Christian movement at that early date, and thus bears indirect evidence to the historicity of Jesus. In addition to these non-Christian testimonies, there is the vast fund of early Christian literature, all of which assumes the historical reality of Jesus.

One feels rather inclined to apologize for devoting even this much space to this matter, for all the readers of the present volume will agree with Orr that "The extravagance of such skepticism is its sufficient refutation" (Int. St. Bib. Enc., Vol. III, p. 1626), but to give a thorough review of the critical movements in the study of Jesus we of necessity give this matter initial consideration.

## II. THE VIRGIN BIRTH.

The Gospel record relative to the origin of Jesus (Mt. chs. 1, 2; Lk. chs. 1, 2) is that he was conceived by the Virgin Mary through the operation of the Holy Spirit prior to her entrance into the marriage relation, that he was born in Bethlehem of Judea, and that his unique character was attested by extraordinary demonstrations of divine power. The task of criticism is to discern whether or not this record is true. As to the place of his birth, all the direct testimony we have designates Bethlehem. Those who claim that he was born in Nazareth assume that such is true because it appears he was reared there; there is no objective evidence for Nazareth. The place of his birth offers no difficulty when the method of his birth has been settled.

Our plan of discussion will be to consider first the *objections* offered by the opponents of the Virgin Birth, then consider the *evidences* claimed by advocates of the theory.

1. *Objections.*

We can not hope to make this section of our discussion exhaustive. For a hundred and fifty years this doctrine has been assailed by hundreds of acute intellects, and every objection has been offered which human genius could devise. We will examine here the few which are really worthy of consideration.

(1) *Inconsistencies in the Gospels Which Describe It.* It is claimed, first, that there are contradictions between Matthew and Luke. We are told that Matthew represents Joseph and Mary as residing in Bethlehem, while Luke holds that they lived in Nazareth and came to Bethlehem on the occasion of a Roman census. When

we examine the actual text of the accounts we find that Matthew has not even a single syllable relative to the previous residence of Joseph and Mary, but does say that they went back to Nazareth after their Egyptian sojourn, and Luke supplies the reason for Nazareth being the home of their choice—they had lived there before. Thus instead of being contradictory the two accounts are supplementary at this point. But we are told that Luke represents the family as going directly from Bethlehem back to Nazareth, while Matthew sends them down into Egypt for a brief stay. What Luke really says is, "And when they had accomplished all things that were according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth" (1:39). We fail to see where this necessarily excludes Matthew's account of the flight into Egypt. Luke does not say that they returned "straightway" or "immediately," nor does he use any other expression which could be construed as contradicting Matthew's account. Why Luke did not mention the Egyptian sojourn we are unable to say, but we are certainly not justifiable in assuming that it did not occur simply because Luke did not record it, any more than we can assume that the parable of the Prodigal Son is unauthentic because Matthew fails to record it. The conspicuous case of contradiction, however, is found in the genealogies. That these vary widely is without question, but since one has fifteen ancestors in four generations, and has the privilege of choosing at the fourth generation between eight lines of descent, variety in genealogy is not a strange matter. That Matthew makes Joseph a son of Jacob and Luke makes him a son of Heli is not difficult to explain when we realize that a Jew regarded any ancestor as a father, and did not hesitate in tracing

his lineage to skip one or more generations. Heli might have been Joseph's maternal grandfather, and still to the Jewish way of thinking Joseph would be the "son of Heli." Jews were specialists in the matter of genealogies, wherefore it ill behooves an occidental to presume to sit in judgment on the question when the Jew has performed the task. To *prove* a contradiction in these genealogies is an impossibility. But it is further objected that the genealogies were constructed by those who regarded Jesus as the literal son of Joseph, else, we are told, there would be no point to them. This objection is without grounds, for if such had been the case it is certain that the two evangelists would not have lodged into their account a conspicuous element which would be contradictory to the chief interest of the record. The point of the genealogies is not Jesus' physical descent, but his legal relations to the house of David. This point is present even in Luke's genealogy, though he presses the relation still farther, to show also his relation to the original head of the race, to exhibit his status as "the last Adam" (cf. I Cor. 15:45). This secondary feature of Luke is undoubtedly a supplement to the genealogy as it was first constructed. In the Jewish way of viewing things there is no contradiction in the genealogies to the idea of a Virgin Birth.

We are next asked to observe the inconsistencies of the Virgin Birth stories with the other portions of Matthew and Luke. In Lk. 2:48 Mary is reported as saying to her divine Son, "Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing," where "thy father" undoubtedly referred to Joseph. Indeed, and what other mode of expression might she have used? In every relation of life except the incident of physical generation Joseph was Jesus' father. We do not hear in modern times

parents addressed as "Adopted father," "Stepfather," and the like. We do not bind ourselves to represent with unvarying accuracy the matter of actual physical paternity. I am unable to conceive of Mary as constantly being on the alert to keep to the front the physical relation of Joseph to Jesus. In their family life, if we are to view the matter as normal and unstrained, Joseph was simply Jesus' "father." The several other references in which Joseph is represented as the parent of Jesus may easily submit to the same explanation. And we might ask, Is one more a parent as the normal result of the relations of wedlock than he would be if so constituted by special divine appointment? In the highest and holiest possible sense Joseph was the father of Jesus: God appointed him to that exalted station (cf. Mt. 1:18-21).

A real difficulty presents itself when we come to that passage in Mark's Gospel which describes the mother of Jesus as joining with his brothers in interrupting his ministry, seemingly because their neighbors had reported to them that he was going to fanatical extremes (Mk. 3:21, 31ff). How could Mary ever doubt a Son whose birth had taken place under the circumstances recorded in the nativity accounts of Matthew and Luke? This is frankly a problem, but to declare it "inconceivable" that she should do such a thing is pressing an assumption entirely too far. Grant the truth of both this incident and the Virgin Birth, and then see how we may explain the apparent inconsistency. We then consider the fact that Jesus had been a loyal and dutiful son in Mary's home for thirty years; that she had seen him engaged in calm and deliberate manner with the normal routine of a human life; had seen him at the carpenter's



bench, had seen him in the marts of trade, had seen him in the simple surroundings of his Nazareth home; he had lived before her a quiet and unostentatious life. Now he is environed with a whirl of confusing excitement; he has cut himself utterly adrift from all home ties; he has abandoned all the responsibilities of the family of which he is normally the head (supposing Joseph to be dead); he is borne forward upon currents of popular feeling which bewilder and startle Mary; his brothers are complaining and her own heart is torn with questionings and confusion. Then neighbors begin to whisper their conviction that he is losing his mental poise, and his brothers announce their determination to interfere with his mad course and remonstrate. Mary was human: she went along. Is the matter so unthinkable after all?

(2) *Silence of the Rest of the NT.* It is claimed that the rest of the NT, outside of Mt. and Lk., knows nothing of the Virgin Birth. But first let us consider what the "rest of the NT" may be reasonably supposed to include. That the nativity accounts are part of the original Gospels of Matthew and Luke few, even of the most liberal, would now venture to deny. Hence there can be no doubt that the author (or authors) of the Johannine literature had these records. The author of Hebrews shows clearly his acquaintance with the Synoptic Gospels, and hence knew of the Virgin Birth. The author of Jude (half-brother of Jesus?) could scarcely have been ignorant of this tradition. And we may safely suppose that the author of Acts (Luke himself) had a knowledge of the belief. This brings "the rest of the NT" down considerably. The real



issue is whether the teaching of Jesus, the Gospel of Mark, and the literature of Paul are inconsistent with a knowledge of the Virgin Birth.

Was Jesus acquainted with any idea of his own supernatural origin? If so, he never revealed in specific terms such a consciousness. But if we admit as authentic sayings of Jesus those statements in which he claims a unique and transcendent relation to the Father, we have grounds for contending that his teaching presupposed the Virgin Birth. It is only those who, on the basis of their own theological presuppositions, delete as not genuine those sayings which ascribe a unique Sonship to Jesus, who are unable to find in his teaching any intimation of the Virgin Birth.

Did Mark know anything of a Virgin Birth? Again we frankly reply that there is no direct statement of such a knowledge. But we can hardly suppose that the tradition so well known to Matthew and Luke could have been wholly unknown to Mark. But even if Mark knew nothing of it, that could scarcely be regarded as final proof that it was not a fact. To say the least, the character of the Messiah as presented in the Gospel of Mark harmonizes readily with the idea of a supernatural origin. *One who accepts all of Mark as historical finds no difficulty in the Virgin Birth.*

The climax of the objection is reached in Paul. That he says nothing about the Virgin Birth is regarded as fatal to the theory. Even direct contradiction to the idea is claimed in some of his statements. For instance, in Rom. 1:3, Jesus is described as being "of the seed of David." This is defined as meaning the physical offspring of David. But the proof is wanting that this definition is correct. Even if it were, Paul might have known that Mary was of the lineage of David, as many

NT scholars have held her to be. But far more likely Paul is thinking in general terms of Jesus as a member of Joseph's household. If Paul knew that Jesus was the child of Joseph by divine appointment (Mt. 1:18ff), would this not make him, in Paul's opinion, far more a member of the Davidic line than would result from mere physical generation? Paul's view of Christ could scarcely be accounted for without the Virgin Birth, and considering his remarkably logical mind it is difficult to believe that he thought of the Savior as having an ordinary human origin. When he so emphatically declares in Rom. 5:12 that "all have sinned," and in Eph. 2:3 that we are "by nature children of wrath," he would certainly perceive the inconsistency of at the same time holding that Jesus "knew no sin" (2 Cor. 5:21), unless he regarded him as having been saved from the common vitiation of sinful human nature by special divine intervention. That the origin of Christ's human form transcended the ordinary method is certainly suggested in Paul's statement that he became "in the *likeness* of men" (Phs. 5:7), "in the *likeness* of sinful flesh" (Rom. 8:3). Certainly if Paul had thought of Christ as having been born by ordinary processes of generation he would have said "he became man," "he became flesh." At least it is difficult to understand how anyone can regard this phraseology as "an expression impossible (?) of use by anyone who regarded the Holy Spirit as the immediate father of Jesus" (Palmer, *Virgin Birth*, p. 13).

That Paul's view of Christ coincides with the Virgin Birth is clear. That he was acquainted with the idea it would be difficult to disprove. To do so one must certainly prove, either that Luke was not the author of

the third Gospel, or that he wrote it some time after Paul's death, either of which positions controverts the colossal scholarship of Adolf Harnack. He must also establish the probability that this tradition arose after Paul's time, and in the light of the present knowledge of the Synoptic tradition this would be difficult to do. If Luke completed his Gospel about 61, and then was in frequent contact with Paul during several years thereafter, it is utterly inconceivable that Paul was ignorant of the Virgin Birth tradition. If the tradition was at all prevalent during even the later years of Paul's lifetime, he would certainly have become acquainted with it. Surely one should be cautious about throwing Paul into the balances against the Virgin Birth. So we see that the "silence of the rest of the NT" is not so formidable an objection as some have thought it to be.

(3) *The Known Mythical Origin of the Conception.*

It is claimed that the legendary sources of the Virgin Birth record may be easily accounted for. Perhaps, however, in the light of the more recent discussions in liberal ranks, we should omit the word "easily," for they are finding it exceedingly difficult to reach an agreement among themselves. Each seems compelled to reject, on historical grounds, some essential elements in the theories of the others. In fact, if we canvass all the discussions from Strauss to the present and eliminate all which has been objected to on "historical grounds," we have nothing left of the mythical theory except the conclusion—all the liberals are still holding tenaciously to that.

There have been two principal theories offered under this head. One is that the legend had a Jewish origin. It is said that the idea arose originally from Isa. 7:14:

“Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” It was believed by the Jews that the Messiah should be born of a virgin, and since the disciples of Jesus believed their Lord to be the Messiah they concluded that he must have had a virgin birth. Hence the legend arose, we are told. But when we examine Jewish Messianism we discover that there is not a trace of any expectation that the Messiah should be born of a virgin. Furthermore, the word rendered *virgin* in Isa. 7:14 really means *a marriageable young woman*. The Messianic application of this verse resulted from the tradition instead of producing it. Hence the foundation of the Jewish theory breaks down.

Another group of liberals recognize that the Jewish theory is untenable, but see a sufficient explanation in the demigod myths of the pagan religions. There were many legends afloat in the Gentile world of extraordinary beings who had a human mother and a god for a father. Therefore, when Christianity came into contact with the Gentile world it must needs invent a virgin birth myth which could compete with its rival religions. The single difficulty in the way of this theory is that no pagan religion has ever been known to have a *virgin* birth legend. In every single case a god has in some form accomplished sexual contact with a woman, and the demi-god has been the issue. The Gentile explanation is therefore not possible.

A later effort to account for the “Virgin Birth Legend” has been to suppose a blending of Jewish and Gentile ideas. The Jewish aversion to any thought of placing God on the same plane with man prevented the acceptance of a divinely wrought conception in the pagan manner, consequently they substituted for that offensive element an “overshadowing” of the Holy

Spirit and birth from a virgin. While certainly this theory commends itself more to reason than either of the others, it meets a fatal difficulty in the fact that the Virgin Birth tradition arose before primitive Christianity had had sufficient contact with the Gentile world for such a combination of ideas to have taken place. A hybrid legend of this sort could scarcely arise in a decade or two, as must have been the case if the Virgin Birth tradition came from this source.

There remains one possible explanation. If the Virgin Birth be legend, this is the way it originated. There is instinct in the religious nature of man an expectancy that he may somewhere, some time, find deity incarnate in human flesh. This has been the ultimate origin of all theories of god-men. If the Virgin Birth be myth, it arose from this religious instinct, and thus had a *psychological* connection with all other like conceptions, though not *historically* related to any of them. But we ask, Why this instinct? Grant a gracious and loving Creator presiding over the universe which He has formed. Grant that He has the moral and spiritual interests of His creatures at heart. Grant that He has a gracious purpose in every faculty and instinct which He has permitted to develop in the moral nature of man. Then the reason for this incarnation instinct grows plain. It is the reflection in the religious experience of the race of a fundamental feature in God's plan for men, a purpose somewhere, sometime to become incarnate in human form and present His final and sufficient revelation. Where? When? Earth and eternity, men and angels join to answer, *In Jesus!*

(4) *Lack of Importance as a Doctrine.* It is said that the Virgin Birth holds no essential place in the doc-

trinal system of Christianity, and hence should be dismissed without protest. If the matter is *merely a question of doctrine*, I assent. If it is only an element in the theological conceptions of historical Christianity, an ecclesiastical dogma, I readily yield the point. It is no part of true criticism to defend creed; its function is to examine the grounds of creed. But the present issue is something more by far than a question of creed. It is a question of *historical fact*. If the Virgin Birth be true, the real critic desires to know its truth, and the evidences therefor. If it is not true—then the canonical Gospels present a legend as sober history, are hence open at all points to grave question as to historical reliability, and must be treated just as we treat their far inferior cousins, the apocryphal gospels. If the Virgin Birth is not a fact of history, then all else of the supernatural in the Gospels is dissipated like the mists of the morning. Many of us who have no special interest in “the creed of the Church” are still very deeply concerned about the Virgin Birth, because it involves that to which we have abandoned our lives, the goal of all our efforts and sacrifice—truth.

(5) *It Involves the Supernatural*. “I do not believe in angels, therefore I can not believe in the Virgin Birth.” Exactly! And just here lies the crux of the whole matter. The preceding objections which we have reviewed, and the legion to which they belong, are all but the *form* which the opposition has taken, its *means* of attack. The *fundamental objection* is that if one is to believe in the Virgin Birth he must accept the supernatural, and this the liberal positively declines to do. To keep up a scientific front he admits the *possibility* of miracles, but he never accepts the *actuality* of one. If



there is any supernatural, the Virgin Birth may be reasonably accounted as a fact; if the supernatural does not occur, then the Virgin Birth and all other Bible miracles are legendary. We have no difficulty in clearing the issue on this point. It all depends upon the attitude of mind in which one approaches the problem.

Believing that miracles not only can occur, but that they have occurred, we now proceed to examine the evidence which supports the tradition of the Virgin Birth.

## 2. *Evidences.*

It is a simple fact of history that for more than eighteen and a half centuries Christianity has accepted as a literal event of history the Virgin Birth of our Lord. This conviction has not been the product of blind credulity, nor has it been based upon speculative arguments. The task of those who have opposed the doctrine has not been to merely indicate defective logic, but to impeach objective testimony. Three great reasons, all based upon objective realities, have resided in the substratum of Christian consciousness and furnished the source of this conviction. Historical Christianity has been confident of *the intrinsic value of the records* which have preserved the primitive tradition of the Virgin Birth; it has respected *the consent of primitive Christianity* to the truth of this tradition; it has recognized the *value of the theory as a hypothesis* in accounting for the Person of its Lord. In the solid rational character of these three considerations our faith is based. We proceed now to demonstrate their substantial worth.

(1) *The Intrinsic Value of the Records.* The narratives of the birth and childhood of Jesus as recorded in Mt. and Lk. are admitted by all to be two independent

accounts. This means that we have two documentary witnesses to the tradition, substantially agreeing with each other. The few contradictions which are claimed we have already disposed of. We may now observe their numerous agreements. In the seven cardinal points of the narrative the two records are in substantial harmony, viz.: (1) that the events occurred "in the days of Herod" (Mt. 2:1; cf. Lk. 1:5); (2) that the birth was announced by angelic messengers; (3) that the parents' names were Joseph and Mary; (4) that they were betrothed when Mary conceived; (5) that Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea; (6) that the event was divinely attested in divers ways; (7) that the family went to reside permanently in Nazareth. Eliminate the supernatural, and *any two ancient documents which record the same event and present so many important points of agreement would be received without hesitation as substantially historical*. The contradictions pointed out by opponents are all incidental and unimportant details, and are in no case necessarily contradictory, as we have already shown.

It may also be observed that the narratives present a remarkable degree of verisimilitude. Luke records as the occasion of the visit to Bethlehem the requirements of a Roman census, and Sir W. M. Ramsay has obtained strong historical proof that this census occurred just as Luke represents it. Matthew describes the visit of astrologers from the east, which, in the light of the known customs of these lands, is a perfectly natural occurrence. Herod's excitement over the announcement of a new "king" fits in exactly with what we know of the closing days of his career. The circumstances at the birth of Jesus: the crowded inn; refuge in a stable (how strange for a legend of a new-born

King!); the punctiliousness of the parents in observing every Jewish requirement for the child; these all are so lifelike and real.

How different the picture of the apocryphal gospels, where we know that the hand of fiction has been at work! According to these stories Mary herself is a child of miracle, and is trained in the temple for her holy office, and Joseph is made aware of his high mission by a dove coming forth from a rod of wood and lighting on him (*Protev. of James*). The boy Jesus, when five years of age, is making clay sparrows by a little stream on the Sabbath, and when complaints are made to Joseph by a supercilious Jew, the lad replies by commanding the mud sparrows to fly, "and the sparrows took their flight and went away chirping" (*Thomas* 2:1-4). "After that again he went through the village, and a child ran and dashed against his shoulder. And Jesus was provoked and said unto him: Thou shalt not finish thy course. And immediately he fell down and died"; and those who complained at this rash and cruel act were smitten with blindness (*Thomas*, chs. 4 and 5). In these gospels we have abundant examples of what the primitive Christian mind could produce when it set itself to inventing stories of the Nativity. How different the simple narratives of our two Synoptic Gospels! Why call their records legendary when we have such clear proof of what legend would do with the Messiah's birth? It will be replied that the apocryphal accounts are but a further development of the legend; we submit that they are a vastly *different* development; yea, not a development at all, but a crass and puerile *perversion*. The Synoptic and apocryphal accounts are not in the same class of thought production: there is

radical difference somewhere. Why this difference? We prefer to accept the simplest explanation, that one is true and the other false.

Let us waive for the moment all doctrinal interests of inspiration and revelation, and grant all we may to prejudice against the supernatural; still we must admit that something of a most remarkable character coincided with the birth of Jesus, for a legend could not have sprung up *de novo* in the few years elapsing between that event and the latest date at which we may possibly conceive of the tradition of the Virgin Birth arising. Place Mt. and Lk, at A. D. 100—the very latest date at which the rankest liberal would dare to place them. Grant, as one must, that the tradition of the Nativity was generally current, in some form. Then it must have come into being by A. D. 75 at the latest. Hence we are asked to suppose that a myth (not conscious fabrication—for few if any assert that—but spontaneous legend) was engendered and attained to quite definite form in less than fifty years! Will someone kindly look up for us a parallel in the entire realm of mythology?

But what if we were correct in our conclusion given above that the Synoptic Gospels were written about A. D. 60-65? Then where the necessary space of time for a myth to arise and become a matter of generally accepted tradition? Historical science has here a difficult problem, when it rules out the supernatural. Little less than pathetic are the efforts of the great Harnack, when he sets his colossal genius to the task of solving this problem (*Date of Ac. and Syn. Gos.*, pp. 136ff).

(2) *The Consent of Primitive Christianity*. Why did this tradition remain unchallenged? There is not an

intimation of protest until the second century, and then by heretical sects (Gnostics and Ebionites) who had polemical designs in denying the doctrine. The tradition originated long before the death of either James or Jude (the former died about 62, the latter after 70), and there would surely be some traces of early reaction against it had these two prominent leaders believed it to be untrue. Suppose Luke was gathering material for his Gospel while Paul was in prison at Cæsarea, as he undoubtedly was if Harnack is correct in his date of Luke's Gospel. Then he got his material for the Nativity section from the Jerusalem Circle of apostolic Christianity. To the truth of this attests the obviously Semitic coloring of Luke's first two chapters. But James was the prominent center of that Jerusalem Circle! Then James must have subscribed to the tradition of the Virgin Birth, for Luke would hardly incorporate a story which the outstanding Jerusalem leader declared to be false. Our candid advice to the liberals is, not to follow Harnack's lead, but to continue their effort at pressing the dates of the Synoptics as far toward the second century as possible—that is, if they wish to maintain with consistency their present views.

But why was the knowledge of the Virgin Birth so slow gaining currency? Why is it not mentioned in the earliest Christian documents? Why did not Jesus himself announce it, if he knew of it? Granting the theory to be true, we would expect its dissemination to take just the course it did. We are certainly not surprised that the humble, modest, shrinking Jewish mother "kept all these things and pondered them in her heart" (Lk. 2:19). They were not matter of a nature to be advertised at the demand of morbid curiosity. Even if the early apostles—a few of them—knew the holy secret,

it was natural that they should only publish its implications as related to the Person of Jesus, and not make public property of the details. But finally, as by one means and another, the Christian world at large began to get hold of the facts, it would behoove him who had set himself to the task of "tracing out the course of all things from the beginning" (Lk. 1:3) to learn "the certainty" of this matter and incorporate it in his Gospel. If the Virgin Birth was a fact, the history may be interpreted without great difficulty; if it was not a fact, the record of it must ever remain an enigma.

(3) *The Value of the Theory as a Hypothesis.* The most satisfactory way in which to account for the marvelous power and transcendent personality of Jesus is by the tradition of the Virgin Birth. Even Jesus' view of Himself is difficult to account for upon any other hypothesis. George Holley Gilbert says, "Thus according to those words of Jesus which are found in the *Logia*—that earliest Christian document of which we have any trace—he thought of himself as chosen to be the revealer of God. His mission was to make known the truth. He thought of himself as a prophet, but as marked off from those who had gone before by the possession of *complete* knowledge of the Father" (*Jesus*, p. 145). If this be true, why should this same liberal scholar deny that Jesus had any consciousness of a supernatural origin? (Cf. *ib.* p. 243.) If Jesus was what he himself claimed to be, or what primitive Christianity claimed for him, the most satisfactory hypothesis upon which to explain his Person is the Virgin Birth.

### III. MESSIANIC CONSCIOUSNESS.

Our estimate of the truth about Jesus must be largely influenced by the question of how Jesus regarded him-



self. Materials of consciousness do not arise without a cause. That cause may be an illusion, but if so there must be an abnormality of mind to give rise to the illusion. If a mind gives clear evidence of being well balanced and of high quality we must assume some substantial reason for the elements of its consciousness. A healthy and acute intellect cannot be the victim of a morbid illusion. This principle is of profound significance when applied to the manifest psychology of Jesus.

But critics have not been able to agree as to just what Jesus thought of himself. Some have maintained that he regarded himself as nothing more than a Jewish Messiah, of the character defined by the Messianic hopes current in his day. There was a theory advanced by Colani in 1864, which secured considerable vogue among German scholars for three decades, that the eschatological discourses of Mk. 13 and parallels was a fragment of current Jewish apocalypse, rewrought for Christian application, and falsely applied to Jesus, to make him out a universal and apocalyptic Messiah. These critics assumed that Jesus thought of himself as nothing more than a Jewish reformer, another prophet in Israel. But this theory found little support outside of Germany, and has now been abandoned by practically all critics (cf. Sanday, *Outlines of the Life of Christ*, p. 156f). But while the details of this theory have been abandoned, its chief point is still being defended by many extreme liberals. By this school of critics Jesus is represented as receiving an inspiration from John the Baptist to usher in a Messianic reign. He believed himself to be a forerunner of the coming Messiah, and not the Messiah himself. This they seek to prove by the objective way in which Jesus uses the term "Son of man." They maintain that Jesus did not mean to apply this

term to himself, but to the Messiah whose advent he was heralding. After a few months of intense ministry he began looking for the immediate appearance of the Messiah, as, they say, is indicated in Jesus' declaration to the Twelve in Mt. 10:23, "Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come." In this saying they maintain that Jesus contemplated an advent of the Messiah in accordance with Jewish apocalyptic conceptions. But the expected Messiah failed to come; the tide of popular sentiment turned away from Jesus, and then the hostility of his enemies found no obstruction; he was forced to retire to remote sections of the country for safety, and began to realize that a tragic end inevitably awaited him unless he abandoned his purpose. As a last desperate resort he seized upon the idea that he was himself the Messiah. But to adopt the Messianic role meant death at the hands of his enemies, so he decided that the plan of the Kingdom would be for him to return after death and usher in the Messianic reign. Hence he surrendered himself to his fate, and began to foretell his death and resurrection. An ingenious manipulation of the Gospel material affords surprisingly plausible support for this theory. It at least discloses to us the necessity of finding out just what Jesus did think of himself.

1. *Titles and Prerogatives Assumed by Jesus.* Any such theory as the above must utterly disregard many things contained in the Gospels. We noted that a very important datum in the theory was Mt. 10:23. But in this same chapter, a part of the discourse on the same occasion, in the very next paragraph, uttered by Jesus with his very next breath, are these words, "Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my

Father, which is in heaven; but whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven" (Mt. 10:32f). What kind of consciousness, pray, do these words express? How strange they sound on the lips of him who is expecting the Messiah to come now in a few days! And we need but to move forward to the very next chapter of Matthew, to a passage which belongs in the first part of the *Logia*, to find these words, "The Son of man came (notice, *came*, past tense) eating and drinking, etc." (Mt. 11:19—Lk. 7:34). Without any possible doubt Jesus here applies the term "Son of man" to himself. Another instance in the *Logia* where Jesus applies the term to himself is Mt. 8:20—Lk. 9:58. In the triple tradition, belonging to the early part of his ministry, we find Mt. 9:6—Mk. 2:10—Lk. 5:24 and Mt. 12:8—Mk. 2:28—Lk. 6:5. These passages in their combined witness remove all question as to how Jesus used the term "Son of man." From the very beginning of his ministry he applied it to himself. It served to express the consciousness which was created in him by his baptismal demonstration, the consciousness which drove him into the wilderness and furnished the occasion for the Temptation.

But what of the significance of this term? It undoubtedly originated with Dan. 7:13, the vision of one coming upon the clouds of heaven "like unto a son of man." That the expression became a general Messianic term for later Judaism is witnessed by its frequent use in I Enoch and IV Ezra. Hence when Jesus applied it to himself he thereby designated himself as the Messiah. However, his teaching and ministry put into the term a content far developed beyond that understood by the Jews of his day. Even his personal disciples were late in comprehending all it signified as embodied in Jesus.

Much discussion among critics has been evoked by the fact that Jesus so often lays claim by implication to the title "Son of God" in the Fourth Gospel, and only one instance occurs in the Synoptics. But this single instance is sufficient to prove that he regarded himself as bearing a unique relation to God as his Father. It occurs in Mt. 11:27ff., with its parallel in Lk. 10:21ff., "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth the Son save the Father; neither doth any one know the Father save the son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him." This is a profoundly significant passage. G. H. Gilbert declares it to be "the most comprehensive and weighty for the subject in hand which is to be found in the *Logia*. It contains the threefold claim that Jesus had a complete knowledge of the Father, that he *alone* had this knowledge, and that he could impart it to receptive souls" (*Jesus*, p. 144). A. T. Robertson says, "The consciousness behind this sentence is not that of a mere man. . . . The fact that Jesus claims to be the Son of God and is so called in Q is beyond dispute, however one may explain the language" (*Christ of the Logia*, pp. 30f). It is further true that at many places in the Synoptic Gospels Jesus accepts from the lips of others the ascription of the title "Son of God," and thereby tacitly lays claim to the title. A claim of unique Sonship in all probability lies behind his reply to his mother in the Temple at twelve years of age, "Knew ye not that I must be engaged in my Father's affairs?" (Lk. 2:49). The "one" instance of this claim in the Synoptics quite evidently has much inferential support. In the light of these facts the Fourth Gospel is in accord with the earliest tradition when it represents Jesus as designating

himself as the Son of God. These evidences are of great significance in the study of his Messianic consciousness.

In addition to these specific titles, Jesus makes other claims for himself which without doubt imply a Messianic consciousness. One of the most significant underlies Mt. 7:24-27, where he declares that human destiny is determined by the reception accorded his teaching! A more astounding claim of supreme spiritual prerogative could hardly be made. If these words are genuine, and we cannot believe them to be otherwise, Jesus regarded himself as the one spokesman with final authority on matters of relationship to God and man. We may compare with this his acceptance and exultant approval of Peter's confession (Mt. 16:13f), and his assumption of the authority to forgive sins (Mk. 2:5).

We may notice finally a direct, explicit claim of Jesus to be the Messiah, recorded in the earliest Gospel. At his trial before the Sanhedrin the high-priest asked him the plain question, "Art thou the Christ?" (*Christos*, Greek for Messiah), and Jesus replied, categorically, "I am," and added further, "Ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven" (Mk. 14:61-62). Messianic claims could not be made in more emphatic terms, but of course this avowal comes at the close of the ministry, where practically all admit that he regarded himself as carrying out a Messianic program.

2. *Messianic Consciousness as Reflected in the Teaching of Jesus.* The distinguishing characteristic of the public ministry of Jesus was his teaching. The miracles attract more attention because of their being necessarily more spectacular, but in the mind of Jesus they were secondary and the ministry of teaching held first place



(cf. Mk. 1:35-39). His teaching he based entirely upon his own authority, without any appeal to tradition. "And they were astonished at his teaching: for he taught them as having authority, and not as the scribes" (Mk. 1:22). This is a most remarkable fact, and of great import for the present question. In the very beginning of his ministry Jesus severed his connection with the tradition of standard Judaism. This was a startling innovation. There is no wonder that the people were astonished. No rabbi of Israel, however great he might become, ever thought of doing such a thing. And not only did Jesus disregard these traditions; he repudiated them. "Ye have heard that it was said unto them of old time . . . but I say unto you" (Mt. 5:21, etc.). No sane teacher, who conceived of himself as building upon traditional Judaism, could have assumed such an attitude. Credit Jesus with only normal human judgment, and you must suppose that he did not regard himself as the Messiah of mere Jewish tradition. He launched out upon an independent prerogative, regarded his own authority as a sufficient foundation for his teaching, and proceeded to a distinctively teaching ministry (cf. Mk. 1:14, 21).

The teaching of Jesus exhibits a threefold import: ethical, Messianic (soteriological), and eschatological. What he intended as the application of his ethical teaching is a problem which has been much discussed. That school of critics who interpret the ideal of Jesus as being wholly apocalyptic maintain that his teaching was merely preparatory to the final great cataclysm. Schweitzer, for example, takes the position that the teaching of Jesus was to inspire a sort of provisional asceticism which might serve as an appropriate mode of life in the brief interim before the Parousia. The failure of this thesis



is that it misrepresents the real nature of the teaching of Jesus. Under this view it must be regarded as a series of formal regulations, while as a matter of fact it is the enunciation of great fundamental ethical principles (cf. E. F. Scott, *Ethical Teaching of Jesus*, pp. 26-29, 42-50). Another weakness of the theory is its mistaken view of the apocalyptic conceptions of Jesus. He did not take over the narrow Jewish conception of a national rehabilitation and exaltation, but regarded the consummation of the kingdom as involving the unobstructed operation of God's will in the experiences of men. It was the expression of this divine will for men, in their relations to God and to one another, which he set forth in his teaching. With Jesus the essence of the Messianic kingdom consisted in a new privilege of the individual to enjoy the fellowship and favor of God. As to its mode of realization, he presented three supplementary views: the kingdom as a present experience (cf. Mk. 4:11; 9:47; 10:14f, 23ff; 12:34; Mt. 5:3, 17-20; Lk. 7:28; 11:20; etc.), the kingdom as a progressive program (Mk. 4:26ff, 30ff; Mt. 13:24ff; Lk. 13:18f; etc.); and the kingdom as a future crisis or condition (Mk. 9:1; 15:43; Mt. 7:21; Lk. 11:2; 13:28; etc.). That he represented the kingdom as reaching a crisis in its eventual consummation cannot be doubted. This is clearly the view upon which is founded his great eschatological discourse, in Mk. 13 and parallels (Mt. 24 and Lk. 21). We are not to suppose that Jesus utterly disregarded the apocalyptic heritage which was his as a Jew. At the heart of the Jewish apocalyptic lay the ancient prophetic conception of the ultimate triumph of Jehovah, and the consummation of His purpose in His people. Traditional accretions had gathered about this idea, and added its narrow, nationalistic features. These

nationalistic accretions Jesus rejected, and founded his eschatology on the original heart of Jewish apocalyptic, which grew out of the prophetic message of the Old Testament. His eschatology contemplates a universal scope for the kingdom, for "the gospel must first be preached unto all nations" (Mk. 13:10) before the consummation.

There can remain no doubt in the light of an inductive study of the teaching of Jesus that he regarded himself as the Messiah sent of God for the redemption of those who would receive him from the entire human race, without national distinction. As the foundation of this Messianic mission he offered the hope of a direct divine intervention on behalf of a ruined and helpless race. This hope has proven to be the only adequate satisfaction for the religious cravings of humanity. It is generated by "the great conviction which must always lie at the heart of religion. Just as science is built up on the assumption that there are certain unalterable laws to which all things must conform, so religion springs from the faith in the sovereignty of God. The world can have no meaning unless we believe that God reigns, and that He will bring everything at last into subjection to His will. Jesus looked for that great consummation, and in view of its coming he offered men his new righteousness" (Scott, *Ethical Tchg. of Jesus*, p. 50).

3. *Messianic Consciousness as Implied in the Experience of Jesus.* We are now at the heart of the question. One needs but to contemplate our Lord as the four Gospels—and particular the Synoptics—reveal him walking into the ever enlarging light of his Messianic mission, to be gripped with the irresistible conviction that his own heart was constantly overwhelmed by a sense of

an eternal meaning in his life. The rigor of his demand for fidelity and faith; his strenuous and incessant application to the work of his ministry; the supreme importance which he attached to his own teaching; the fortitude and grim resoluteness with which he faced his horrible death; all these and many other evidences prove that the heart of Jesus was constantly burdened with a sense of immeasurable responsibility. So intense was his reaction to this controlling impulse of his life that neighbors and relatives feared for his sanity (cf. Mk. 3:21, 31).

In three experiences especially did his Messianic consciousness disclose itself in distinct reality.

(1) The first was the *Temptation*. It is not possible that the account of this could have originally come from anyone save Jesus himself. That it is authentic even the majority of liberals admit. Jesus had, at some time during his ministry, disclosed to his disciples these three great trials which accompanied his entrance upon his mission. But only a deep sense of divinely appointed Messiahship could have furnished the basis for these insidious suggestions of Satan. The realism of the experience is exceedingly vivid. When the full revelation of his Messianic character came to Jesus at his baptism (cf. Mt. 3:16, 17) it quite naturally overwhelmed him with a sense of his colossal responsibility. His heart burdened with the weight of his divine and eternal mission, he would naturally seek comfort and strength in solitude with the Father. Consequently, he is "led up of the Spirit into the wilderness" (Mt. 4:1). In the period of intense struggle and prayer which ensued, he neglected to take food—was most naturally disinclined to eat. When the demands of physical hunger finally gained his attention Satan used the very problem with

which the Savior was wrestling as an occasion for temptation. If he was what the baptismal experience indicated, the Messiah and Son of God, then he need not hunger: all he needed to do was command, and stones would be turned into bread. If he was the Messiah, he need not fulfill the role of the Suffering Servant (Isa. 53), but just worship Satan and victory would be yielded him without any effort or sacrifice on his part. If he was the Messiah, then why not come to his people in the way in which they were expecting their Messiah, by some mode of spectacular appearance? Then they would receive him with acclamations of joy and confidence. Cast himself down from the precipice of the Temple, and the Jews would believe that he was the Messiah descended direct from heaven. On the assumption of a Messianic consciousness all these suggestions are easily explained; otherwise they are unaccountable. To accept the historical genuineness of the Temptation compels the acceptance of a full-orbed Messianic consciousness in Jesus from the very beginning of his ministry. The "successor to John" theory utterly breaks down before the Temptation.

(2) The same sense is reflected in the *cleansing of the Temple*. We prefer the chronological position assigned to this event by the Fourth Gospel, and regard it as signifying that Jesus felt himself obligated, *as the Messiah*, to begin his ministry by the restoration of the proper worship of Jehovah in the center of His chosen race. When the leaders resented his effort, he abandoned them and their Temple to their dismal fate, and turned his effort in another direction. But whatever position one may hold as to the chronology of this event, one thing is certain, Jesus engaged in this radical effort either because he was the Messiah, or because he was a

fanatic. In the light of the sober and rational character which all the rest of his career reveals, the latter alternative is impossible. The only satisfactory interpretation of this event is that Jesus performed the startling deed under an overwhelming sense of Messiahship.

(3) We turn finally to the *Triumphal Entry*. None could doubt that Jesus suffered this demonstration only because he believed himself to be the promised Messiah of Israel. In fact, even the most liberal criticism now admits the truth of this. But does it not appear, as presented in the Gospels, to be the climax of a Messianic consciousness which had reigned in his soul throughout his ministry, growing more intense in degree and clearer in the details of his destiny, but not more real in fact? But the extreme liberal regards the event as evincing an entire change in program on the part of Jesus, a change from an assumed character as the herald of the coming Messiah to that of the Messiah himself. Such a theory has a purely subjective basis; the Gospels present Jesus as considering himself the Messiah from early life. "Our sources make it very clear that he believed himself to be not an unannounced and unheralded messenger of God, but the Messiah of the prophets, and the kingdom of God which he proclaimed, the kingdom foretold by them" (McGiffert, *Apostolic Age*, p. 19).

Here stands before us the most magnificent and serene mind among all the generations of men. It has left as its unique product a group of teachings which have revolutionized the thought and life of the world. Its conceptions of ethics and religion have proven timeless in their transcendent worth. The greatest intellects of all the ages have acknowledged the unrivalled superiority of this mind—the mind of Jesus. But this mind was possessed with an overpowering conviction, a con-



viction that its chief function was to achieve, in accordance with divine appointment, the spiritual redemption of men. In view of its strength and reliability in every other capacity, how could this phenomenal mind have been so grossly deluded on this point? Surely it perceived somewhere a sublime reality which created this conviction. The Messianic hope of the Christian religion is built upon that invincible fact attested by friend and foe, saint and infidel alike—the unimpeachable intellect of Jesus Christ.

#### IV. MIRACLES.

The chief occasion for the reaction against traditional Christianity has been its belief in the supernatural. This same fact has been the chief objection to the orthodox view of the Person of Christ. The spread of humanistic philosophy created a type of mind which was inherently opposed to the supernatural; which possessed an ingrained prejudice against it. The advance of the scientific spirit in the last century has forced the abandonment of this philosophical presupposition theoretically, but actually it still prevails in the liberal wing of Christian scholarship. We are to take account of this mental attitude as we study the criticism of miracles, and observe how it inevitably exhibits itself, in spite of the efforts of those who are possessed by it to keep it suppressed, and give an unbiased consideration to the problem. There are in reality deeply entrenched prejudices on both sides of the conflict—inevitably so: therefore we need never hope for an “unbiased” conclusion.

In our consideration of the problem we will notice first the *objections* of those who deny the miraculous; second, the *explanations* offered by them for the exist-



ence of the records of miracle; third, the objective *evidences* which testify to the genuineness of the supernatural; and fourth, *the present state of the problem*.

### 1. *Objections.*

Those who deny the supernatural no longer allow that it is upon an *a priori* rejection of the possibility of miracles. Schmiedel, for instance, raises the question, Are miracles possible? and declines to answer it in the negative. But when he comes to the next question, Must we believe in miracles? he finds objections which he regards as necessarily preventing their acceptance (cf. *Johannine Writings*, pp. 84ff). Opponents of the supernatural disclaim any philosophical prepossession against the belief, but contend that they have good objective reasons for rejecting it.

There are three principal objections offered.

(1) They maintain that miracles must inevitably be a violation of the laws of nature. Schmiedel declares it necessary to "reckon seriously with the fact that a miracle under all circumstances is a violation of the laws of nature" (*Johannine Writings*, p. 87). This depends entirely on what one conceives "the laws of nature" to be. If they are regarded as mechanical and rigid processes operating spontaneously in the universe, then any variation from their ordinary modes would certainly be a "violation." But if we conceive of the laws of nature as God's ordinary methods of manipulating the elements of His material creation, then we have no trouble in accepting the possibility that for some unusual purpose God might temporarily adopt *extraordinary* methods. It really resolves itself into a question of how intimately we relate God to the material universe. The Christian conception is that God is everywhere and

always immanent in His creation, therefore for Him to suspend or modify any of the normal processes of nature involves no violation. "Once postulate a God who, as said, has a being above the world as well as in it, a Being of fatherly love, free, self-determined, purposeful, who has moral aims and overrules causes and events for their realization, and it is hard to see why, for high ends of revelation and redemption, a supernatural economy should not be engrafted on the natural, achieving ends which would not be naturally attained, and why the evidence for such an economy should on *a priori* grounds be ruled out of consideration" (Orr, *Resurrection*, p. 49).

(2) The further objection is raised that it is not sufficiently clear to reason that God would desire miracles in the establishment of true religion. It is affirmed that the Bible contains a sufficient revelation of God independent of the miraculous. Then the question is raised, Why should God resort to the supernatural when the natural will abundantly serve His purposes? This objection contains two fatal weaknesses. The first is, it assumes to define an adequate revelation. The simple fact is that miracles introduce into revelation an element which it could not contain without them. This element is its consequent transcendence: it is lifted out of the category of ordinary human processes. Why presume to decide that God did not *purpose* just this sort of revelation? Just because it does not quite suit the crass materialism of some modern minds is not conclusive proof that it would also be displeasing to God. Perchance God preferred a transcendent revelation.

The second defect of this objection is the error of its contention that a merely "natural" revelation would serve God's purposes. *At the time when God revealed*

*Himself it was just the miraculous which caused His revelation to be received as authentic, and transmitted to subsequent generations.* If God had waited until the twentieth century to give His revelation to men, granting our present state of enlightenment, it is conceivable that He might have secured acceptance of His revelation without any miracles. But God was not pleased to wait. The simple fact is that He did reveal Himself to and through primitive, plastic minds, minds which He could influence and mould at will. For these minds miracles were a necessary attestation.

(3) Again it is objected that the records of miracles present in themselves evidences of their unhistorical character. In support of this objection the most ingenious efforts are exerted to find minute discrepancies. The objector ignores the fact that variation in the understanding of events would be naturally much more liable in describing a miracle than in recording some event of perfectly familiar and ordinary character. No effort whatever is made, or even countenanced, to harmonize apparent discrepancies in the accounts of miracles, for the critic prefers to regard the record as unhistorical.

The method of many liberal critics is all too clearly to accept as historical that which serves the purposes of their own theories, and reject all else. An example may be found in the objection to the miracle of Christ walking on the water, first recorded in Mk. 6:45-52. It is objected that the incident is inconsistent with Jesus' refusal in the Temptation to turn stones into bread, and thereby yield to the popular Messianic conception (cf. Gilbert, *Jesus*, p. 258). This argument appears to assume that it was possible for Jesus to accept and act upon the suggestion of Satan. But if Jesus had the power to turn stones into bread, where is the difficulty in believing

that he could walk on water? The writer seems unconscious of his tacit admission of the possibility of one miracle in providing an argument against another miracle. And even the point of the argument is not well taken. The critic appears not to perceive the distinction between yielding to an intimation from Satan, and an effort to reveal to the disciples the unique character of Christ's Messianic power. A comprehensive view of the character of the records will be offered later in the discussion.

## 2. *Explanations.*

The liberal critic is faced with one embarrassing fact. In the world's supreme literature, the literature of greatest intrinsic value, it is a fact that miracles *are* recorded. Here we have before us a literary phenomenon which requires explanation. Various attempts have been made, but they may be classified under three heads: the rationalistic, the mythical, and the naturalistic.

(1) *The Rationalistic Method.* This method proceeded on the hypothesis that all miracles could be made to appear reasonable. None was rejected as a whole, but a nucleus of historical fact was found encased in a mesh of primitive misconceptions. The effort of this school of critics was to reduce the supernatural in the ministry to its lowest possible minimum, if not to eliminate it entirely, yet to do this without affecting the substantial course of the Gospel story. For example, Hess (1768), in treating of the incident of the demons being cast into the swine, explains that the confusion was not caused by the demons, but by a group of Gadarene demoniacs, who dashed among the swine in their insane fury, and caused the stampede. It is only that

the primitive mind supposed that the demons entered the swine (cf. Schweitzer, *Quest, etc.*, p. 30). This was an effort to reconcile "reason" and orthodoxy.

(2) *The Mythical Method.* The colossal genius of Strauss gave currency to this method of explanation. It was simply to reject *in toto* everything which contained in any degree a suggestion of the supernatural. The theory at least had the admirable merit of being consistent. It failed because of the demonstrable facts about the Gospel records, especially the Synoptics. The mythical theory, thoroughly applied, left but a few uncertain remnants of the entire Gospel story. Such a procedure the liberals were compelled to abandon. Those who advocate it now are rare exceptions.

(3) *The Naturalistic Method.* This is the method in vogue among the great majority of the liberals at present. Its varieties of form are almost equally numerous with its advocates. However, the general features of the theory are held pretty well in common. It is obviously similar to the rationalistic method of the nineteenth century, the chief difference being in the motive. The effort of the rationalistic interpreter was to conform miracles to reason; the naturalist seeks to conform them to "nature." That is, the naturalist undertakes to discover at the basis of the miracle a real substratum of the historical fact which may be submitted to a perfectly natural explanation. Around this nucleus of reality he thinks there has gathered a coating of "legendary accretions." He assumes that criticism can remove this tegument of legend, and discern with fair accuracy what the actual history was.

But when he arrives at such a miracle as the healing of the high-priest's servant whose ear had been severed

by Peter, he must abandon his method of "explanation" for a point-blank denial. To dissipate the miraculous from this story is to have nothing left. Then we must assume either that the incident occurred as described, or that there grew up a myth in the short space of thirty years or less. There is no case of "legendary accretion" here: it is all legend or no legend.

To this juggling of ancient records under the guise of criticism one prefers the procedure of Strauss in rejecting *in toto* every account which had even a taint of the miraculous about it. As we read some of the present day explanations of miracles we are tempted to re-examine the title page to see if perchance the book is a revised edition of Herder or Paulus.

An extreme application of this naturalistic hypothesis is to place all miracles—Biblical and extra-Biblical—in the same class, and account for them all in the same way. According to this explanation they arose out of the credulity and superstitious imagination of primitive peoples, out of situations which were in themselves calculated to produce such illusions (cf. Matthew Arnold, *Literature and Dogma*, p. 116ff). This is really a combination of the mythical and naturalistic theories.

### 3. *Evidences.*

(1) *In the NT.* The chief evidence is to be found in the simple testimony of the Gospels. It is the quality of this evidence which we wish now to consider. We begin with the narrative source common to Mt. and Lk., which, if not part of the *Logia*, was at least as early, and undoubtedly antedated Mk. The tradition of which it is composed arose immediately after the dawn of the Apostolic Age. *It gives the testimony of honest eyewitnesses.* What it records those who were with Jesus



believed that they saw and heard. Yet it contains two of the most emphatic miracle-passages to be found in the Gospels. One is the healing of the centurion's servant from a distance (Mt. 8:5ff—Lk. 7:1ff); the other is Christ's own citation of his miracles in answer to the message of inquiry from John the Baptist (Mt. 11:5—Lk. 7:22). The latter is a most remarkable testimony. If accepted as the authentic words of Jesus, it is absolutely conclusive proof that the Master believed himself to be a worker of miracles. And it embraces the most incredible of the miracles which he performed: "the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and *the dead are raised up.*" Thus witnesses the most ancient Gospel source in our possession—the "Q" of the German scholars. Its testimony must be held in high regard, yet its evidence favors the reality of the supernatural in the ministry of Jesus.

Our next witness is that most ancient of our canonical Gospels, the Gospel of Mark. It quite likely arose within at least thirty years after the events it records. Yet it is in just this Gospel and its parallels that we find in greatest abundance the detailed records of miracle. It is distinctively the Gospel of wonders. It sees Jesus primarily as the wonder-worker. One who denies the supernatural in the ministry of Jesus must impeach the testimony of the earliest Gospel, as well as of the earliest Gospel source, and assume that in primitive Christianity legends grew up like mushrooms—overnight. Against such a procedure sober reason rebels. Of one thing there can be no rational doubt: Those who witnessed the ministry of Jesus observed phenomena which they sincerely believed to be supernatural. "Their good faith cannot be reasonably questioned. Nor can we doubt that their

whole attitude of mind towards these things which they saw with their own eyes, and heard with their own ears, and did with their own hands, was the attitude of men who believed themselves to be in contact with miracles" (Sanday, *Life of Christ in Recent Research*, p. 214). This means at least that the works of Jesus as wrought before his own generation *produced the effects of the supernatural*. This meets the objection often advanced that miracles had no real place in the Messianic mission of Jesus; the fact is that in that mission as it affected his age miracles held a very large place. "We may well doubt whether, without miracle, the belief would ever have grown up that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, in view of the striking absence of those attributes and functions which the Jews expected in their Messiah" (*op. cit.* 213).

Our consideration of the Gospel record of miracles then leads to this conclusion: these accounts cannot justly be placed in the category of mere legendary developments, but were reports of what eyewitnesses believed themselves to have seen. It so happens, however, that we do have some legends of our Lord's ministry which were created by the pure activity of religious fancy. These are the miracle records of the Apocryphal Gospels. A typical example may be cited from the Gospel of Thomas: "On a certain day when there had fallen a shower of rain he went out of the house where his mother was and played upon the ground where the waters were running: and he made pools and the waters flowed down, and the pools were filled with water. Then saith he: I will that ye become clean and wholesome waters. And straightway they did so. But a certain son of Annas the scribe passed by bearing a branch of willow, and he overthrew the pools with the branch, and the

waters were poured out. And Jesus turned about and said unto him: O ungodly and disobedient one, what hurt have the pools done thee that thou hast emptied them? Thou shalt not finish thy course, and thou shalt be withered up even as the branch which thou hast in hand. And he went on, and after a little he fell and gave up the ghost." We have here an instance of what early Christian imagination actually produced when it began to supply wonders to the career of Jesus. The vast difference between this and the canonical gospels is too obvious to mention. But why should second century Christianity employ such unreasoning fancy as compared with first century Christianity? The answer is at hand. The primitive disciples were reporting phenomena which had actually passed under their observation. Therefore there is nothing in their accounts which is course and rude, nothing incongruous with the manifest spirit and ideals of Jesus.

The basis of actuality for the miraculous in the NT finds its most convincing proof in the Epistles. Three passages in particular may be noted. In Gal. 3:5 Paul asks his readers, "He therefore that supplieth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" This passage places it beyond doubt that Paul and the Galatian Christians believed that miracles had been wrought among them. There is no possibility of legend here; things had actually taken place which they believed to be miraculous. Might not the healing of the lame man at Lystra have been one of these miracles? (cf. Ac. 14:8-10). We find Paul calling the attention of the Corinthians to miracles which he himself had wrought, and proposing them as the final and indisputable credentials of his apostleship (II Cor. 12:12). The third pas-

sage is Heb. 2:4, "God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers (same word translated "miracles" in Gal. 3:5), and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will." Here the author reminds his readers that the divine origin and eternal importance of the gospel has been attested to them by miraculous demonstrations. There had been no force whatever to his argument, it would have been a mere childish absurdity, unless the readers believed that they had actually witnessed miracles. And this is no story of something which has taken place in the more or less distant past. It is reference to a relatively contemporaneous experience, and is wholly unintelligible unless those addressed were known to have had the experience. There is certainly nothing legendary here. The evidence of the Epistles proves at least this much: *There were in first century Christianity phenomena which impressed those who witnessed them as being supernatural in their character.* And it is noteworthy that we obtain this evidence from the two most intellectual writers of the NT.

It is perfectly clear that the evidence of the NT is of such quality that it cannot be lightly set aside on any hypothesis of ordinary legend. People who lived then really believed that they saw the miraculous. Then the only plausible explanation must proceed in the direction of the state of mind which characterized that age. To this point we now proceed.

(2) *Historical Setting.* The first century was credulous toward miracle. This fact is beyond dispute. The NT does not contain the only instances of the supernatural coming to us from that age. So the easy and superficial way in which to dispose of the problem be-

fore us is to assign all such narratives to superstitious fancy and naive credulity. But this disregards the most significant facts in the case. In the first place, it ignores the transcendent superiority of the NT records as compared with other accounts of miracle. The character of this evidence we have considered in the preceding section. It is certainly not just to weigh testimony without regard to the character of the witnesses. Hence this consideration alone would compel us to place the NT miracles in a class to themselves. But another matter of great import is to be observed. The general character of the history with which the NT miracles are associated is far above the normal course of ordinary human events. Hence the supernatural is more commensurate with the nature of primitive Christianity than with any of its contemporaneous religions.

It has been thought that the great question relative to miracles is: Can Christianity find sufficient sanction without them? and the question has, by many devout and well-meaning modernists, been answered with a fervent affirmative. But the greater question is: Can Christianity find a sufficient *explanation* independent of the supernatural? It is not possible to understand how ordinary processes of human history could have produced the known phenomena of the Apostolic Age, and of those centuries which issued from it like a fountain from its head.

But shall we dismiss the question before us by simply assuming that the miracles of the NT had no relation in any way with the first century susceptibility to the supernatural? Such unhistorical methods are never convincing. Let us honestly ask what the facts are. It was an age which not only accredited but expected the miraculous. We have seen that without doubt primitive

Christianity believed that its message was attested by the supernatural. It is also true that they would not have had sufficient confidence in that message without the witness of miracles. In this they were but men of their own century. Then it was just the supernatural (or the impression of the supernatural) in the ministry of Jesus and the Apostolic Age which gave the Christian message its mighty influence over the minds of its first adherents. Our conclusion is now right before us. When God gave His revelation through Christ He adapted it to the age in which it was given: He accompanied it with the supernatural. And faith is prepared to go a step farther. By processes of providential development God produced an age whose state of mind would best respond to the supernatural character and manifestation of His Son and the world's Redeemer.

(3) *The Person of Christ.* A sense of unspeakable security settles upon the soul at the very mention of this witness. When we have groped in wretched confusion through the bewildering intricacies of the modern criticism of miracles, until the heart aches, and faith falters, and the mental vision is blurred, what an infinite comfort it is just to return and pillow our distraught heads upon the bosom of Him who is Himself the one surpassing Miracle! I cannot stand in the presence of Jesus without believing in miracles. The merely natural has never sufficed to explain Him.

We need to start first with the Person of Christ as portrayed in his words: the soul of the man as reflected in what he taught. Considering Jesus in the light of the significance of his message, even as accepted by the most liberal critic of modern times, we cannot account for



him on purely natural grounds. While his conceptions were quite certainly and necessarily related to his age, and exhibited a point of contact with his age, they nevertheless so far transcended his age as to put it beyond scientific possibility to explain them as the outgrowth of his environment and training. Such an attempt has been frequently made, but has not secured the consent of even the majority of liberals. Our Lord is acknowledged by all to have been the wise and adaptable servant of his generation, but none has been able to prove him the creature of his generation. The historical Jesus stands before us as transcending the ordinary categories of human life: *Jesus himself was supernatural.*

This being true, we would expect the character of his deeds to comport with that of his words. In the light of the facts of personality manifested in his teaching, it would be a matter of surprise if the ministry of Jesus did not contain the supernatural. Miracles could never be found in a more harmonious setting than is presented in the life of Christ. Furthermore, miracles are the only satisfactory explanation of the impression made by Jesus upon his contemporaries. "Eliminate miracles from the career of Jesus, and the belief of Christians, from the first moment that we have undoubted contemporary evidence of it, . . . becomes an insoluble enigma" (Sanday, *Life of Christ*, p. 114).

(4) *Christian Experience.* To the insistent inquiry of this scientific age in which we live, "Is there such a thing as miracle?" every true child of God can make at least one positive reply, "I am a miracle." The phenomena of Christian experience have never found a satisfactory naturalistic explanation. To say the least, one

who has had such an experience possesses a state of mind which is well adapted to faith in the supernatural.

#### 4. *Present State of the Problem.*

Dogmatic denial of miracles is a thing of the past. The critic now does no more than cautiously disclaim belief in them (cf. Schmiedel, *Johannine Writings*, pp. 84ff). In fact, many frankly liberal critics now accept them in part, though they take all the "super-" out of supernatural. They divide miracles into three classes: healings, nature miracles, and resuscitations. The first class are now quite generally accepted, though many seek to give them a naturalistic explanation and make them "reasonable;" the second class are rejected with a few exceptions; while the third class are thought by liberals to be in no case genuine restorations from the dead; though they do not deny a possible basis for some of the resurrection narratives.

We find one encouraging tendency in the far greater caution in rejecting a narrative merely because it presents the supernatural. The critic takes care to seek in the Gospels themselves reasons for such rejection.

One is also impressed by the disposition evident in much of the liberal literature of the present to accord to Jesus a position and character above the ordinarily human. The time was when a skeptic took a degree of pride in dogmatically asserting that Jesus was "a mere man," but now the most liberal critic admits that he is "quite prepared to find in the history of Jesus and especially in his inmost character much that is unfathomable" (Schmiedel, *op. cit.* p. 71). Such statements constitute an encouraging indication for the future criticism of miracles.

## V. THE RESURRECTION.

We approach here the climax of miracles. If Joseph's tomb is empty, it leaves room for all the supernatural contained in the NT.

One thing may be accepted as a final and absolute certainty. *The disciples of Jesus believed that they saw him alive from the dead.* However, in stating this as such a firmly settled conclusion we do not mean to intimate that its truth has never been challenged. It has. Some have maintained in opposition to it that the disciples by deliberate intention invented the theory of the Resurrection. They explain that the disciples stole the body from the tomb and concealed it, then went forth and proclaimed the Resurrection. Such a theory needs no refutation (but see Milligan, *Resurrection*, pp. 80f). Others take the position that it arose as pure legend in a subsequent generation of Christian disciples, based upon some vague suggestion which arose in the minds of the disciples after Jesus was buried, interpreted in the light of what they regarded as necessary to the fulfillment of scripture relative to the Messiah. Advocates of the latter theory have, in recent years, called into service the methods of the science of comparative religions, and have represented the Resurrection story as compiled from an admixture of Jewish Messianic notions and Gentile myths. There is no other theory of modern criticism which we are willing so peremptorily to dismiss as this utterly unjustifiable denial. It entails a warping and twisting of the evidence to which even Baur declined to resort (cf. *Hist. of First Three Centuries*, vol. I, p. 42). We need not examine the grounds for it (cf. Orr, *Resurrection*, chap. IX); it is only necessary to present the conclusive evidence against it. After

the evidence has been reviewed, we will then see how modern criticism seeks to explain this well-nigh universally admitted fact.

### 1. *Evidences.*

We are not attempting here to offer an exhaustive list of the proofs of the Resurrection. It shall be our effort to avoid entirely mere *arguments* which are composed largely of theory, and to confine ourselves to real objective *evidences*. Argument and evidence are sometimes entirely different matters. The former is often very theoretical. It is not theory but fact which we purpose to offer here. There are four witnesses whose testimony we will consider: the record of the Resurrection in the four Gospels; the testimony of Peter; the testimony of Paul; and the conduct of those who went forth to proclaim the Resurrection.

(1) *The Testimony of the Gospels.* Those who deny a literal Resurrection make much of the alleged contradictory nature of the various accounts in the Gospels. Our method here will be to simply present in parallel columns the text of the Gospel records.

Mt. 28:1-8—

Now late on the sabbath day, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. And behold there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone and sat

Mk. 16:1-8—

And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, brought spices, that they might come and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week they came to the tomb when the sun was risen. And they were saying among themselves, who shall roll us

Lk. 24:1-8—

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came unto the tomb, bringing the spices which they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. And they entered in and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, while they were perplexed thereabout, behold,

Jn. 20:1-10—

Now on the first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early while it was yet dark unto the tomb, and seeth the stone taken away from the tomb. She runneth, therefore, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the

upon it. His appearance was as lightning, and his raiment white as snow: and for fear of him the watchers did quake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which hath been crucified. He is not here; he is risen even as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell his disciples, He is risen from the dead, and lo, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him; lo, I have told you. And they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring his disciples word.

away the stone from the door of the tomb? And looking up they see that the stone is rolled back: for it was exceeding great. And entering into the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, arrayed in a white robe; and they were amazed: And he saith unto them, Be not amazed. Ye seek Jesus the Nazarene which hath been crucified; he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him! But go, tell his disciples and Peter, He goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you. And they went out and fled from the tomb; for trembling and astonishment had come upon them: and they said nothing to anyone; for they were afraid.

two men stood by them in dazzling apparel: and as they were affrighted, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying that the Son of man must be delivered up into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered his words.

Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they have laid him. Peter therefore went forth, and the other disciple, and they went toward the tomb. And they ran both together; and the other disciple outran Peter, and came first to the tomb; and stooping down and looking in, he seeth the linen cloths lying; yet entered he not in. Simon Peter therefore also cometh following him, and entered into the tomb; and he beholdeth the linen cloths lying, and the napkin, that was upon his head, not lying with the linen cloths, but rolled up in a place by itself. Then entered in therefore the other disciple also, which came first to the tomb, and he saw, and believed. For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. So the disciples went away again unto their own home.

How shall we approach these narratives? There is but one legitimate attitude. They represent themselves



to us as literal history; we are to accept them as such, unless there is preponderant evidence against them. When one reads them in this open and sympathetic attitude, the inevitable impression is that the main substance of the four accounts is in marked agreement, and that the divergencies are but incidental, such as would inevitably arise in the oft-repeated narration of any startling event. That is to say, to the plain Christian student these passages offer a practically harmonious testimony. It is the acute and highly trained literary critic who can find the numerous discrepancies. But let us not forget, it was not the critic, seeking exact technical harmony, who wrote these precious records for us, but devout and believing Christian spirits, like the simple disciple of today, who recorded as faithfully as their facilities would allow the tradition as they had received it.

A close scrutiny of the passages reveals two facts; first, that their agreements are on the vital and more prominent features of the marvelous event; and second, that their divergencies pertain to incidental and unimportant details (unimportant to all save the critic who wishes to use them to discredit the record). Let us examine the passages and see if this observation is true. The agreements are: (1) the time was early morning on the first day of the week; (2) women were the first to come to the tomb; (3) the tomb was found open and empty; (4) and guarded by angelic visitants; (5) the angels announced the resurrection; (6) and sent a message to the other disciples. These items compose the consistent and connected story told by *four* witnesses. The divergencies are: (1) as to the exact hour of the visit by the women; (2) as to the names and number of



the women; (3) as to the number of the angelic messengers; (4) as to the exact time and wording of the message to the disciples. One would very much dislike to be a prisoner, charged with murder and tried by a competent jury, and have submitted against him the testimony of four alleged eyewitnesses which presented the same agreement and divergence exhibited by these four parallel narratives. In all the prominent and essential points they agree; their differences are incidental and unimportant details.

Note two matters relative to the discrepancies. First, they are not, in any case, necessarily contradictions. In the second place, they reflect the particular variety in purpose of each evangelist (cf. Milligan, *Resurrection*, p. 60). Matthew presents matters which afford an effective contact with distinctly Jewish life and thought; Mark stresses those details which impress the wonder of the event; Luke emphasizes (in 23:55-56) the human touch in the characteristic sympathy of the women in desiring to give additional attention to the body of Jesus; John shows interest in a particular character in whom he can best present the transcendent nature of the event. These distinctive elements in every instance reflect a characteristic trait of the writer. "The streams are slightly colored by the different soils through which they have passed, but they conduct us to the same fountain head" (Milligan, *ib.*, p. 62). The divergencies are just sufficient to prove that we have four independent witnesses, and not just duplicates of one original account.

An added support to the truth of these narratives is the fact that Jesus himself predicted his Resurrection. To the evangelical student this is very convincing, though for the liberal it means little. He impeaches the

Gospel records of Jesus' prediction of his Resurrection, and contends that the words were put into the mouth of Jesus by subsequent legendary tradition. After thus attempting to prove the error of the Gospel testimony, he dogmatically asserts, in emphatic type, that "*there was no explicit word of Jesus touching his bodily resurrection*" (Gilbert, *Jesus*, p. 277). And yet the liberals accuse the evangelical scholar of biased judgment!

(2) *The Testimony of Peter.* We have in the NT one document which is now very generally admitted even by many liberals to have come from the pen of an apostle, and an eyewitness of the ministry of Jesus. This is the First Epistle of Peter. In the light of this epistle there can be no doubt that Peter believed the Resurrection to be a fact. (Cf. I Pt. 1:3, 21; 3:21, 22). Here we have one who companied with Jesus during the greater part of his earthly ministry, who witnessed his trial and crucifixion, and who was without any doubt in close touch with the entire group of disciples from the burial of Jesus until Pentecost, and he confidently declares that God "raised him from the dead" (1:21). It is not possible to suppose that Peter could be persuaded to accept a tradition which he knew there were no facts to support. Had the Resurrection story been a legend, Peter would have known and condemned it as such. Peter's acceptance of the Resurrection as a fact can be explained in only one way, He believed he had seen his Lord alive from the dead. To this same belief he gives testimony in his address in Acts (cf. 2:24-32), words which are generally agreed to have been actually spoken by Peter. This eyewitness of the life of Jesus believed that he had risen from the dead.

(3) *The Testimony of Paul.* Though Paul is not an

eyewitness of the ministry, his evidence is important for three reasons. He was in close contact from an early period with those who were eyewitnesses (cf. Gal. 1:18, 19); he was converted from the most intense hostility toward the Christian movement, though a man of wonderfully acute intellect and wide culture; his conviction of the truth of the cause he espoused moved him to great extremes of personal sacrifice. The combination of these three facts makes Paul a powerful witness to the Resurrection. His faith in it finds abundant expression throughout his epistles. The fact that he makes it the cardinal truth of the Christian religion, of "the gospel," seems to indicate that it was the chief basis of his own faith. Paul became convinced that Christianity was genuine when he became convinced that Jesus was alive from the dead (cf. Ac. 9:3-9). Of special interest is his statement in I Cor. 15:3-8. These words throw the testimony of Paul back upon the witness of the original group of disciples. He declares that "he appeared to Cephas; then to the twelve." In view of his fifteen days interview with Peter at Jerusalem (Gal. 1:18), there can be no doubt that these words convey to us literal history. If Peter had not seen the Lord he would have so informed Paul. It is indeed likely that Paul got his information on this point, including the appearance to the twelve, and later "to all the apostles," directly from Peter. Paul also tells us in Gal. (2:19) that he saw James in Jerusalem. Is this not why he knew that "then he appeared to James?" To say the least, if the tradition of the appearance to James had been false, it is likely Paul would have known of its fallaciousness. But most forceful of all is his statement, "then he appeared to above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain until now, but some are fallen

asleep" (verse 6). There could be no mere credulous subscription to legendary tradition here. Either there were these numerous living witnesses of the Resurrection, or Paul deliberately falsified. But it is utterly out of harmony with the character of Paul, made evident by all his writings, to suppose that he would be guilty of a deliberate falsehood. The only rational conclusion is that he told the truth. He had received his information from some of the very group of five hundred which he mentions, at least indirectly, most likely directly. And on the basis of the testimony which he had received to this momentous fact he risked his life in the face of every conceivable peril and endured the most extreme hardship (cf. II Cor. 11:23-29). Wherefore, "it is clear that we have, in the Apostle of the Gentiles, not only a witness for a bodily Resurrection of our Lord, but one whose evidence is confirmed and strengthened by every consideration that can lend it weight" (Milligan, *op. cit.* p. 45).

(4) *The Testimony of Apostolic Experience.* This is confessedly not the most direct or the most objective evidence, but to one who ponders it long enough, and sympathetically, it becomes the most convincing. The fact of the sacrificial devotion manifested by these early witnesses to the Resurrection is surely conclusive proof that they accepted it as a fact, but this is not the only aspect of the evidence. The quality of life and character which belief in this fact produced is profoundly significant. When we contemplate the zeal with which they went out to proclaim this new message of Resurrection hope, the fortitude with which they faced the most deadly opposition, the missionary enthusiasm with which they pressed the message out to the widest possible limits,

the compassion for a disconsolate world which dominated the spirit of their efforts, we cannot think of them as the simple-minded victims of a delusion. The nobility of character, the exaltation of ideals, the transcendence of hope which characterized this group are the fruits of a sincere and earnest conviction. The contribution which they have made to history, constituting the greatest benefit ever received by the human race, could not have originated in the ethereal regions of myth. The life of Apostolic Christianity can only be explained by real and abiding faith in a Risen Redeemer.

We have considered four pieces of testimony, viz., that of the Gospels, of Peter, of Paul, and of apostolic life. The cumulative effect of all this evidence is tremendous. It establishes beyond dispute as a fact of history that the contemporaries of Jesus believed that he arose from the dead, that his tomb was empty, and that they had beheld in tangible form his risen body. This they believed; how account for their belief? This brings us to the theories advanced in explanation of the Resurrection.

## 2. *Theories.*

We have seen in the preceding discussion that objective data *prove* as historically true the belief of the original disciples of Jesus in his Resurrection. But let us carefully bear in mind that this does not prove the Resurrection. There is one other step to be taken before we arrive at rational certainty as to the fact itself. We must find the hypothesis which best explains this faith of primitive Christianity. We will consider the four leading theories.

(1) *The Swoon Theory.* This theory seems to have originated with Paulus, and was made popular for a

time by the influence of Schleiermacher. It has now been practically abandoned. It offers as the explanation of the empty tomb and the belief in the Resurrection that Jesus was really not dead when taken down from the cross, but was in a state of coma, and the cool and damp interior of the sepulchre caused him to revive, and that in some way his restoration to consciousness was discovered, and he was released from the tomb. Hence, when the women came they found the grave empty, and the discarded grave-cloths lying where Jesus had left them, and supposed that he had been miraculously raised from the dead. The impossibility of this theory lies upon the face of it, and one's mind is thronged with the difficulties before it, but it is sufficient just to quote the criticism of Strauss: "It is evident that this view of the Resurrection of Jesus, apart from the difficulties in which it is involved, does not even solve the problem which is here under consideration—the origin, that is, of the Christian church by faith in the Miraculous Resurrection of a Messiah. It is impossible that a being who had stolen half-dead out of the sepulchre, who crept about weak and ill, wanting medical treatment, who required bandaging, strengthening, and indulgence, and who still at last yielded to His sufferings, could have given the disciples the impression that He was a conqueror over death and the grave, the Prince of Life, an impression which lay at the bottom of their future ministry" (cit. by Orr, *Resurrection*, p. 43).

(2) *The Wrong Tomb Theory*. This is a very ingenious explanation. According to it the women reached the garden in which the sepulcher was located before day-break, and on account of the darkness made their way to the wrong tomb. A young man standing



near surmised their errand and sought to correct them, saying, "Do you seek Jesus of Nazareth? He is not here. Behold, yonder is where they laid him," pointing out the right sepulchre. But the women were frightened and fled away, believing that some supernatural being, "an angel," had accosted them. Out of this incident, according to this theory, the tradition of the Resurrection grew. Legend took this nucleus, with reports of apparitional appearances, and wove about it the detailed narratives of the four Gospels. The weakness of this theory is its arbitrary treatment of the data. It selects those elements of the record which serve its own ends, and rejects the rest as unhistorical. Why reject the visit of Peter and "the beloved disciple" to the sepulchre? Why reject the testimony of the Roman guard to the empty tomb? These items fail to fit the theory: therein lies the only reason for their rejection. The theory is based upon a selected portion of the data, and then made the standard for judging the rest of the evidence. The self-evident criterion of judgment in this theory is to accept as historical those threads of the Gospel tradition which may be detached most conveniently from the supernatural, and deny the rest. Such a method is wholly unscientific, and cannot hope to prove satisfactory.

(3) *The Vision Theory.* This hypothesis is very popular in present day liberal criticism. It stresses the fact that the disciples were in a state of great mental agitation, and therefore unusually susceptible to vision. Mary Magdalene, naturally a woman of nervous and sensitive temperament, had the initial vision, and started the contagion. (Here is a strange and sudden deference to the Fourth Gospel!) It rapidly spread until

many believed that they had seen the Lord. Jewish notions of a future resurrection and the predictions of Jesus offered a basis for the hallucinations. The idea of the empty tomb, the angelic visitants, and other details, were easily supplied by religious fancy. Thence came the story of the Resurrection, and the triumphant faith of Apostolic Christianity.

This theory has one pronounced advantage. It adopts a basal hypothesis, and rigidly applies it to all the data alike. This basal hypothesis is that the belief in the Resurrection was the product of a fertile imagination operating upon a state of mental excitement and nervous tension. Though the hypothesis for this case is assumed, it unquestionably has parallels. It is not *per se* unreasonable. But in the light of certain facts and considerations it is untenable as an explanation of this case. There are four objections to it.

a. It is inconsistent with the records. We have seen abundant reasons for having great respect for the Gospel records. But this theory takes any liberties with them which its own exigencies may demand. For one thing, it reverses the mode of development as represented by the tradition. The Gospel accounts proceed from the empty tomb and the angelic announcement to the visions; this theory goes in the opposite direction. The Gospel records represent that the appearances were literal. The appearance to Mary Magdalene is so lifelike that she mistakes her Lord for the gardener. This is not at all like an apparition. The other women *took hold of his feet*. When he appeared to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus they thought he was a stranger, until he intentionally granted them an intimation of his identity. He explained the scriptures to them, a rather unusual performance for an apparition.

They urged him to come in and break bread with them. People do not ordinarily invite ghosts to take supper. He said to a group of his disciples, "See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold me having" (Lk. 24:39). This is a strange request for a hallucination to make. He invites Thomas to examine his scars. Ghosts are not very generally known to possess scars. One thing is clear beyond dispute. To accept this theory requires to utterly repudiate any vestige of trustworthiness in the Gospel records. Then why have any vision theory at all? Why not abandon the tradition *in toto* as an invention of fancy?

b. It fails to adequately explain the attitude of Paul. We can not believe that Paul would have failed to detect "ghost stories," if such the accounts of the Resurrection appearances had been. The position advocated by some that Paul thought of them purely in this light is unthinkable. The fatal objection to such an interpretation is that Paul makes the resurrection body of Christ the prototype of our resurrection bodies, and ours are to preserve absolutely their original identity (cf. 1 Co. 15:35-49). There is one thing of which we may rest assured in the case of Paul: he did not regard the appearances as superstitious apparitions, but as literal manifestations of the resurrection body of his Lord. In view of his splendid mental equipment and his passionate devotion to the cause of Christ this conclusion is incapable.

c. The theory is untenable for psychological reasons. No purely subjective vision can be experienced unless the mind is already in possession of all the elements contained in the vision, and is expecting it to occur. Only those see apparitions who anticipate them, who

“believe in them.” And the apparition is always of a presupposed nature. Practically all the “ghosts” seen by the Southern negro are white. This grows out of the notion that spirits are white. So far as our data indicate, there was no anticipation whatever in the minds of the disciples of the Resurrection. On the other hand, they were unable to comprehend the reality of it when Jesus himself foretold it. And even after he had appeared a number of times, Thomas could not be convinced, but was led to acknowledge the glorious fact when he himself saw his Lord. Thomas was surely in no attitude of mind to receive an apparition. When Jesus appeared to the five hundred in Galilee, even as he stood before them, “some doubted” (Mt. 28:17). It is difficult to understand how a person would doubt a subjective vision. What they doubted was not that they actually saw a human form before them, but that that human form was really Jesus. The psychology of the disciples certainly lacked the element of expectancy of the Resurrection, and lacking this it could not have possessed a concrete conception of the form and mode of appearance of that Resurrection.

*d.* The hypothesis is inadequate. This is the fatal objection. The attitude of mind which harbors hallucination is *always* superstitious credulity, and not calm and inspiring faith. All seeming exceptions to this rule are found, upon thorough examination, not to be exceptions. If the credulity is not habitual, it is temporarily induced by some special effort or environment, or by an exciting event. The effects produced by the Resurrection experience of Apostolic Christianity do not submit to such an explanation. Theirs was not superstitious credulity, but triumphant faith. To say that the confidence of primitive Christianity in the Resurrection of

its Lord was the result of illusory apparitions is to postulate a psychological phenomenon which is utterly without parallel. Nowhere else, in all human history, has the occurrence of mere spectral appearances wrought effects anything similar to those produced by faith in the Resurrection of Jesus. Just confront the claim in simple language. A number of superstitious, much-excited people, on widely separated occasions, saw ghosts. Then the excitement calmed down, the apparitions were accepted as substantial facts, and a new religion, the greatest the world has known, was built thereon. When thus viewed in its ungarlished features the absurdity of the theory appears. The more one considers it, the more he is convinced that the suggested cause can not account for the known result. To accept this theory would require to reinterpret Apostolic Christianity, reducing very greatly the present high estimate of its character. But the literature which is now almost unanimously ascribed to this period makes such a conclusion impossible.

(4) *The Literal Resurrection Theory.* We have seen that the data of the N. T. demonstrate as a fact that the contemporaries of Jesus believed they saw him alive from the dead. Then we faced the question of accounting for this belief. We have examined the three leading explanations offered by liberal criticism, and found them unsatisfactory. Not only do they fail to leave our minds at rest on the problem, but they fail to satisfy the facts. We now turn to the explanation offered by evangelical Christianity. It is that the body of Jesus, transformed by the divine miracle of the Resurrection, literally arose from the grave on the third day, as the fitting climax of his Messianic ministry.

The contention is made by some objectors that the Resurrection stories were invented to supply a satisfactory conclusion to the Messianic career of Jesus. That his career would have been far from satisfactory without it we do not deny. A Savior who had died a helpless martyr, died because his program had failed of realization, would not offer a very inspiring appeal. The career of Jesus, viewed as a Messianic mission, would be sadly incomplete without the Resurrection. Then if one admits that God had any part in the ministry of Jesus, and yet denies the Resurrection, he is compelled to acknowledge that God suffered the career of His Messiah to culminate in a very disappointing fashion. The fact is, no one can consistently dispute the historical truth of the Resurrection, and at the same time hold to Jesus as a divinely appointed Messiah. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, then God had nothing to do with his career as a Messiah, for a God who fosters a failure is no God at all. If it be objected that Jesus' career was not necessarily a failure without the Resurrection, that his example and teaching could still have had their highly beneficial effect, we would reply that it is a simple matter of fact that Jesus would have failed had not his disciples believed that he arose from the dead. He might be a teacher and exemplar without a Resurrection, but a Messiah he could not be.

Then the evangelical theory of the Resurrection is built upon one fundamental premise: the conviction that God has provided in His Incarnate Son a consistent and sufficient Plan of Redemption. He ushered Him into the incarnate state by the miracle of the Virgin Birth; He laid upon His spirit during His earthly ministry a controlling, consuming sense of His Messianic mission; He attested His divine nature and redemptive pur-



pose by supernatural manifestations; He suffered Him to die upon the cross as a means of securing the just pardon of the sinner, but loosed from Him the bands of death and raised Him from the grave, thus demonstrating His victory over the forces of evil and decay, and guaranteeing His power to save. Such is the Christian hypothesis for Christ. It would be sadly and hopelessly defective without the Resurrection. With the Resurrection it is gloriously complete.

With the fall of man the sable gloom of depravity's night settled over the human race. Through its shadows man has groped in his vain and pathetic quest for the light. At last there cleft the clouds of darkness a single star of eternal hope—the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. In this message of triumphant faith fainting hearts take courage again, disconsolate souls are cheered, tears are dried from weeping eyes, and death's dark shadows lifted. This glorious hope of the Resurrection breaks asunder the fetters of sin, and proclaims to the captive souls of men eternal emancipation.

“Up from the grave He arose  
With a mighty triumph o'er His foes,  
He arose a Victor from the dark domain,  
And He lives forever with His saints to reign.  
He arose!  
He arose!  
Hallelujah! Christ arose!

To a sorrowing race in earth's despair carry the heartening message; to saint and sinner, friend and foe proclaim the truth divine; through haunts of earth and halls of heaven sing the glad refrain, till harps of angels and celestial choruses join to swell the triumphant strains, that all the universe of God may know that Joseph's tomb is empty! Jesus, at God's right hand exalted, lives and reigns forever!



## CHAPTER XV.

### PRIMITIVE CHRISTIAN THOUGHT.

We now have before us a matter of most vital consequence: the impression made by Jesus upon his own contemporaries. It has been necessary to anticipate to some extent in our study of the Resurrection. We have seen that Jesus' contemporaries believed that they saw him alive from the dead. It is further certain that they did not believe that he ever again suffered death, but ascended to a place of exaltation with the Father, and that he would return again in great glory to effect the final consummation of his Messianic Kingdom. On these points criticism is pretty well agreed. It is the more particular interpretation which the primitive disciples gave to this risen and exalted Messiah which has given rise to the great divisions of opinion.

As we approach this problem we are to bear in mind that it is this interpretation of Jesus in primitive Christian thought which has impressed him upon subsequent generations. Had he not secured for himself a transcendent place in the mind of Apostolic Christianity the world would never have known that he lived. And all that the world knows about him, historically, it received from the primitive disciples, for they alone knew him during his earthly career. Whatever may be said of later accretions, it can not be denied that the essential nucleus of the Christian conception of Christ was the interpretation of him in primitive Christian thought. It was these original disciples whose holy

task it was to enshrine in the heart of the world the Person of its Redeemer and King.

We shall consider first the earliest *records* of primitive Christian thought, then its literary *products*, and finally its evident *sources*.

#### I. RECORDS.

These we have in the book of Acts. Its importance here arises from two considerations. (1) It discloses the historical situation in which primitive Christian thought developed. This, however, is denied by those who place its date at or after A. D. 100. They quite plausibly claim that upon this premise we must regard the book of Acts as reflecting elements of a later historical situation. But if we assume the earlier date, we leave no question that the background of history which it portrays is real and accurate. (2) It records the discourses which constitute the earliest extant expression of primitive Christian thought. Here lies its prime importance for this phase of criticism. It is therefore quite urgent that we should settle as far as possible the question of its date, authorship, and reliability. The matter of date we have already considered, placing its composition at about 62 (cf. p. 175), hence there remain for investigation the questions of authorship and reliability.

##### 1. *Authorship of Acts.*

On this point there has not been a great deal of dissension. It has been widely held, including even some liberals, that the author was Luke the companion of Paul, the one to whom tradition unanimously ascribes the book. That it was written by the author of the third Gospel is even more generally agreed. Some

however, deny both propositions. The arguments urged against the latter view—of common authorship with the third Gospel—are so subjective and intricate that we do not feel justified in taking space for them in this discussion. Therefore we turn our attention to the question of the author's identity. It is urged against the Lucan authorship that there are "gaps" left in the course of the history which are inconsistent with the theory that a contemporary of Paul wrote it. This objection entirely disregards the fact that the author was limited as to the length of his document, and without any doubt made it as long as the literary facilities and customs of his time would allow. The "gaps" were not a matter of choice, but of necessity, and we should surely allow to the author, whether a companion of Paul or not, the liberty of selecting his own material. It is further demurred against the Lucan authorship that it reflects a form of church government which was later than Paul's time. This objection is based upon a theory that definite official life did not begin in the churches until late in the first century, against which theory Phils. 1:1 stands out as a fatal refutation. But the theory disposes of this passage as an interpolation. The most formidable objection which has been advanced is the apparent inconsistency of Acts with Paul's epistles, which we take up when we come to discuss the question of historical trustworthiness. The weakest argument yet offered against the traditional authorship maintains that since there is not sufficient internal evidence in favor of the tradition it must be rejected. This objection is wrong in principle: it demands that we consider the prisoner guilty until he is proven innocent. It is wrong in fact: the internal evidence is favorable to the tradition, as we shall now proceed to show.

(1) *Similarities to Language of Pauline Epistles.* Luke, the traditional author of Acts, was a companion of Paul. Then if genuine Pauline reflections can be detected in the book it goes far toward confirming the tradition. A number of such traces in the language are indicated by Sir John Hawkins (*Horæ Synopticæ*, p. 189). But Moffat dissents (*Introduction*, p. 300), and, though accepting the Lucan authorship, regards the argument from the linguistic similarities to Paul as of very little force. However, when one considers carefully the data offered by Hawkins he can not escape the conviction that they furnish at least strong corroborative evidence, if not independent proof. Other traces of Paul have been seen in the spirit and viewpoint of Luke-Acts, but this hardly proves anything relative to the identity of the author. We can claim no more than that it is in harmony with the tradition.

(2) *The Medical Terminology.* In Col. 4:14 Paul refers to "Luke, the beloved physician." We would therefore expect that if Luke-Acts was written by him, we should find medical terms in the books. This is exactly what we do find. Critics who oppose the Lucan authorship seek by every possible means to minimize the force of this argument, but it nevertheless remains as a plain, demonstrable fact. The matter was fully worked out a number of years ago by Dr. W. K. Hobart (*Medical Language of St. Luke*, 1882), "whose materials have recently been sifted with results which converge on the thesis that the author of both works was a Greek physician, and therefore, inferentially, the Luke of the NT" (Moffatt, *Introduction*, p. 298). This evidence gives direct and convincing support to the tradition.



(3) *Evidence from the "Diary."* In four passages in Acts (16:10-17; 20:4-16; 21:1-18; 27-1-28:16) the author employs the personal pronoun "we" as the subject of narration. These are called the "we"-sections, or the "diary." They prove one of two things to be true: either a written diary of a companion of Paul was used as a documentary source, or the author was giving personal reminiscences. Either theory comports with the traditional authorship. But if the author of the "we"-passages is also the author of the rest of Acts we should expect to find a vocabulary and style common to both. Such is the case. The actual data in proof of the similarity are given in abundance by Sir John Hawkins (*Horæ Synopticæ*, pp. 182f), and the array is convincing to any open mind. But the absolutely conclusive investigation in this field has been conducted by Adolf Harnack, who has published his results in three works (*Luke the Physician; The Acts of the Apostles; Date of the Acts and the Synoptic Gospels*). He takes up the material of the "we"-document verse by verse and points out innumerable instances of similarity in language and style. He actually finds 325 correspondences in words and phrases, and exhibits them in the Greek text (*Date of Acts, etc.*, pp. 4-12). He further shows that the peculiarities which are found to be characteristic of the author of Luke-Acts are most abundant in these "we"-sections, where the writer has the liberty of his own reminiscences, or at least his own materials. We do not hesitate to declare that Harnack has *demonstrated* the fact that the author of the "we"-passages in Acts is also the author of the rest of the book, and the third Gospel as well. The author of this diary material was without doubt a companion of Paul, as practically all critics admit. Then Hobart has proved

that the third Gospel and Acts were written by a physician; Harnack has proved that they were written by a companion of Paul. No stronger support could be desired for the tradition that Luke-Acts was written by Luke, the beloved physician.

## 2. *Reliability of Acts.*

The fact that the book was written by a contemporary of the events, and frequently an eyewitness of the events, lends great value to its records. But it also possesses an intrinsic character which has of late been turning criticism progressively in its favor. Schenkel, in a work published in 1879, remarked concerning Acts, "I have been forced to the conviction that it is a far more trustworthy source of information than is commonly allowed on the part of modern criticism." This favorable judgment occurred at the time when the tide of critical opinion was turning from the skeptical attitude of Baur and his adherents, who considered Acts to be "a late controversial romance, the only historical value of which was to throw light on the thought of the period which produced it" (cit. *Int. St. Bib. Ency.* p. 44). This extreme position was soon abandoned, and the book has been growing in favor ever since. McGiffert is quoted as acknowledging that Acts "is more trustworthy than previous critics allowed" (cf. *Int. St. Bib. Ency.*, p. 45). Harnack renders as his judgment: "The book has now been restored to the position of credit which is its rightful due. It is not only, taken as a whole, a genuinely historical work, but even in the majority of its details it is trustworthy. (Harnack would except its records of miracle.) Judged from almost every possible standpoint of historical criticism it is a solid, respectable, and in many respects an extraordinary

work" (*ib.*). Even Julicher, though he finds a number of details which he regards as unhistorical, is led on the whole to conclude: "We can not overestimate the value of a book to which, perhaps, we do not exactly owe our comprehension of the Apostolic Age, but to which we are very largely indebted for our ability to use the oldest documents, the Epistles of Paul, towards such a comprehension" (*Intro. to NT*, p. 451). Unquestionably true is the opinion rendered by A. T. Robertson: "At any rate the prejudice against Luke is rapidly disappearing" (*Int. St. Bib. Ency.*, p. 45).

But there are still some points at which Acts is being challenged. We will consider briefly the more important.

(1) *Inconsistency with the Epistles of Paul.* The chief objection which has been raised against the historical reliability of Acts is that it does not harmonize with the historical reference contained in the Pauline Epistles. This objection arises from the interpretation placed by liberal critics upon Paul and his theology. Paul can, in accordance with perfectly reasonable methods, be interpreted in the light of both Acts and his Epistles in such way that the inconsistencies disappear. For instance, it is maintained that the author of the Epistle to the Galatians could never have subscribed to and assisted in circulating the document approved by the Jerusalem Conference according to Acts 15. But it is far more difficult to see how the author of Galatians could also write the words of Rom. 9:1-5; 11:1-24. Such a judgment involves too much of the subjective to be a fatal objection. That there are some discrepancies in matters of historical detail we frankly

admit, but these have been greatly exaggerated, as, for instance, when it is asserted that Peter could not "possibly" have been guilty of the dissimulation described in Gal. 2:11ff. if he had experienced the visions of Acts 10:9ff. (Julicher, *Intro.*, p. 442). This is attributing a rather remarkable constancy to Simon Peter, and overlooks the fact that this same dissimulation is exceedingly strange in the light of Gal. 2:9. In fact, it is rather precarious to say that one can not "possibly" do anything which involves the perversity of human nature. Such an objection makes the impression of an effort to "hunt up" contradictions. The few discrepancies which exist do not prove to be irreconcilable, and are only such differences as will inevitably arise in two independent accounts of the same course of events. These natural divergencies certainly can not prove that any of Luke's work was either consciously or unconsciously a fabrication. There is striking appropriateness in the observation of Ramsay that "Acts rightly understood is the best commentary on the letters of Paul, and the letters on Acts" (*Trustworthiness of NT*, p. 52).

(2) *Inconsistency with Josephus.* One grows impatient of a criticism which so clearly manifests its prejudice as to assume that when a divergence occurs between a NT writer and *one* other ancient historian, the NT writer is always the one open to suspicion. Granted that Luke does contradict Josephus on a few points, *he has proved himself to be deserving of more respect as a historian than Josephus.* In the particular places where Luke disagrees with Josephus, a close examination points quite decidedly in favor of Luke (cf. Zahn,

*Intro. to NT*, pp. 97ff.). That this objection has been enthusiastically urged shows the temper of much liberal criticism.

(3) *Inaccuracies in Geography and Political Terminology*. At one time this objection was given great prominence as utterly fatal to the acceptance of Luke as a trustworthy historian, but recent researches, especially those of Sir W. M. Ramsay, have destroyed much of the grounds of this adverse criticism. The objections that remain, solely because the data have not yet been discovered to overthrow them, have a strong suspicion cast upon them by the refutation of the others. We have been led to surmise that Luke, who was so close to the original facts, was better acquainted with these matters than modern critics, who must ascertain them at a distance of nineteen centuries.

An instance of a reversal of opinion which has been compelled by the facts may be noted relative to Acts 14:1-6. Here Luke describes Paul and Barnabas as going from Iconium into Lycaonia. Now the older very positive opinion was that Iconium was itself a city of Lycaonia, which made Luke out as guilty of a very awkward inaccuracy. It was as though one should speak of going from Chicago into Illinois. But we find in the "Acts of Justin" a testimony from a native of the city that Iconium was in Phrygia. This evidence finds quite positive corroboration from Pliny (*Nat. Hist.*, v. 41). There has appeared other strong support of the truth of Luke's descriptive notice, but the finally conclusive evidence was the discovery in 1910 of a monument in the ruins of Iconium bearing an inscription which proved that that city still used the Phrygian language as late as 200 A. D. (cf. Ramsay, *Trustworthiness of NT*, pp. 65-

78). This left no doubt that it was still a Phrygian city at 47-48, the time when the event recorded by Luke occurred. So the former opinion of the historical geographers was wrong, and Luke right. A number of other instances of the same kind might be cited. (See especially the works of Sir W. M. Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller, Pauline and Other Studies, Cities of St. Paul, Luke the Physician*, and *The Bearing of Recent Discoveries on the Historical Trustworthiness of the NT*. The last mentioned is particularly commended.)

Then we may rely upon Acts as a faithful and accurate record of the life and teaching of the original apostolic group, both because it was written by a contemporary and because its own contents have been tested and proved to be valid. The events recorded may be regarded as authentic; the discourses reported may be accepted as substantially accurate. Therefore Acts furnishes us our source of first rank in the determination of primitive Christian thought.

## II. PRODUCTS.

The products of primitive Christian thought must be found in the NT writings outside of the literature of Paul and the historical books—the Gospels and Acts. That brings up for consideration eight epistles—James, 1 and 2 Peter, Jude, Hebrews, 1, 2 and 3 John—and Revelation. The task of criticism is to discover whether we may depend upon all of these as really representing primitive Christian thought, and if not, just which may be rightfully placed in that class. We treat them here in what we regard as their chronological order, though the question of date will of necessity be subordinate to other considerations.



## JAMES.

This epistle may safely be regarded as the most ancient Christian literature which is extant in its original form. This, however, is disputed by many liberals, who consider it one of the latest of the NT documents (cf. Julicher, *Intro.*, 224ff.). But there are five groups of evidence which point very convincingly toward its early date.

(1) *Its primitive character.* Any one who has a general acquaintance with early Christian literature must recognize the validity of this evidence. The document most similar to it in early Christian literature is one extant in a Latin translation which bears the title, *De Doctrina Apostolorum*. The primitive nature of this document inclines patristic scholars to place its date prior to the end of the first century. Yet its primitive character is not so pronounced as that of James. Another evidence of early date advanced for the *Doctrina* is its intensely Jewish coloring, but in this respect it is certainly rivalled by our Epistle. James belongs to the gnomic type of Jewish literature, being the only NT books which can be placed in that class, which shows the great influence exerted over its composition by rabbinic Judaism. In this respect it is certainly more primitive than Paul, and belongs in the class with the teaching of Jesus.

(2) *Early situation reflected.* The Christians addressed are in need of the very simplest practical instructions; they are Jewish Christians mainly, if not exclusively, and are still a part of the Jewish community; they have not yet been able to adjust their synagogue customs to Christian ideals (3:lff.); they are

either using the Jewish synagogues for worship, or they are accustomed to refer to their own Christian assemblage by the Jewish term, rather than the later Greek word *ekklesia* (2:2); and there is manifest among them a gross misunderstanding of the most rudimentary Christian doctrines (2:14ff.). The fact that the latter is the only passage in which there appears the least doctrinal concern also points to an early date.

(3) *Its literary connections.* It is very generally agreed among scholars that there are manifest literary relations of James with 1 Clement, Hebrews and 1 Peter. Advocates of a late date assume the dependence of James upon these writings, but in the light of the former considerations we should certainly not be able to place it as late as I Clement, and hardly as late as Hebrews. It is therefore more in line with probability to accept the connection the other way.

(4) *Its relation to Paul.* Advocates of a late date make much of the argument that the Epistle reflects a period when Paul's doctrine of justification was becoming misunderstood and perverted (cf. 2:14ff.). That there is no necessary contradiction between the two is now generally agreed. But it is difficult to believe that James would have written just as he did had he been acquainted with the views of Paul. If he had known the Pauline Epistles, especially Galatians and Romans, "it is inconceivable that . . . he could have said just so much and no more" (Dods, *Intro. to NT*, p. 193). Had he been opposed to the Pauline doctrine, he certainly would have made his reply more extended and explicit; if not opposed, he would have expressed himself in a different form. The most natural supposition

is that he was not acquainted with Paul's literature, most especially Galatians, the third in order of Paul's Epistles.

(5) *Absence of controversial element.* The perversion of doctrine is not contemplated by James as heresy, but as a mistake in practical experience. Opposition to "the gospel" or "the truth" is not within this author's horizon of thought. The interest of the epistle is dominantly ethical, the same interest which was evoked by the Jerusalem Conference. Hence it could not well be dated before that event, and certainly not long after. The most satisfactory date is about A. D. 50.

The question of the author is and must remain in the realm of conjecture. All we may learn from the text of the Epistle is that it was written by an earnest Christian leader named James. Who this James was can never be demonstrated certainly. When a critic on bold assumption charges the Epistle with being pseudepigraphic—*assumes* (for there is not a scintilla of objective proof) that the writer wished to be regarded as James of Jerusalem, but was not, he forfeits all claim upon our respect for his critical opinions, which opinions are thus clearly dominated by unreasoning prejudice (cf. Julicher, *Intro.*, pp. 220ff.). There is not an intimation anywhere in the entire Epistle that the author is to be identified with James of Jerusalem. The salutation is as unassuming and casual as it could possibly be, for, while one who accepted the traditional authorship might expect the author to designate himself as "the brother of the Lord," he finds instead simply "a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ." The theory that this greeting was added by a later hand to ascribe it to one of the apostolic circle assumes that the

one who attempted thus to lend to the document apostolic standing made the blunder of failing to sufficiently designate the author to make it clear just what James he meant! Such a theory is refuted by its own absurdity. The only reasonable supposition is that some Christian leader by the name of James wrote the Epistle.

A late tradition represents this Christian leader to have been James the brother of Jesus, who became the dominant figure in the Jerusalem circle. There is considerable internal evidence favoring this view. The general character of the Epistle seems to harmonize with what little we know of the character of James. There may be seen a few traces of similarity between it and the encyclical sent by the Jerusalem church to the Gentile churches after the Jerusalem Conference, of which James was probably the author. We have noted above that the Epistle reflects the interest which characterized that Conference. Hegessipus, an ancient Christian writer of Palestine, reports James as replying to his accusers at the time of his martyrdom, "Why do you ask me concerning Jesus the Son of Man? He himself sitteth in heaven at the right hand of the great Power, and is about to come on the clouds of heaven." We find an echo of the same conception in James 5:7. There are passages in the book which remind one of the style of Jesus, and especially of the Sermon on the Mount (cf. 4:11, 12, 14; 5:12). This would be easily accountable for as coming from one who had lived many years in the same home with the Master. Finally, James was the one best qualified to use to Jewish Christians the tone of authority which we find in this book. Thus the internal evidence is in harmony with the tradition.

There is, however, one real difficulty in the way of

the tradition. The book is written in splendid idiomatic Greek, and it seems rather unlikely that James, who was reared in a Galilean home and in all probability learned Aramaic as his native tongue, should have such a thorough mastery of Greek, and even exhibit familiarity with Hellenistic-Jewish literature. But on close examination this difficulty is found not to be insuperable. That Palestine was a bilingual country (using both Greek and Aramaic) there is now no doubt. Hence it is unthinkable that one could move about its centers of population as a prominent Christian leader and not learn the Greek language. And it is also highly probable that one in James' position, the central figure of Jerusalem Christianity, would acquaint himself with the best religious literature of his day, which was Jewish and much of it written in Greek. Therefore, while this is an admitted difficulty, it does not render the traditional authorship impossible. We may at least say that tradition offers the best definite hypothesis for authorship which has yet been proposed.

#### I PETER.

This is one of the great messages of the NT. While many critical problems have been raised about it, no one now questions its intrinsic value, or its right to a place in the canon of the NT. It reflects a period of persecution, and one of the chief problems for criticism is to decide which persecution constitutes the occasion of the book. Many liberals contend that the persecution is quite clearly that which took place under Trajan's reign, the one for which we have quite definite evidence in the letter of Pliny to the Emperor. Some would place the date in the reign of Domitian. Still others contend

for the closing years of Nero's reign. But the fact is, these theories are all untenable. They are annulled by I Pt. 2:13-17. Here Peter urges the Christians to pay respect to and seek the favor of the Roman authorities. The attitude reflected in these verses is inconceivable for a time of bitter imperial persecution. How could a loyal and sympathetic Christian leader urge his suffering fellow-Christians to "Honor the king" (2:17), after the hideous outbreak in the latter part of A. D. 64? How conceive of applying this to any Roman emperor when to the Christians he was a monster of tyrannical oppression? If there exists any other instance of this incongruous attitude we are not aware of it. It is insinuated in 3:13 that nothing need be feared from the officers if they are convinced that the Christians are really orderly in their conduct. The situation here reflected is rather one in which Christianity is still formally regarded by Rome as a *religio licita*, but is coming to be feared by pagans as a dangerous rival to their own religions, and to be looked upon with some suspicion even by the authorities—hence the necessity for showing particular respect to the Roman officers (2:13,14). The passions of pagan jealousy are just beginning to break forth into active persecution, and have not yet secured civil sanction (cf. 4:17). (Cf. Moffatt, *Intro*, p. 323.) This would place the date of the Epistle at 63-64. A corroborative evidence of this early date may be found in the great expectancy that the parousia was soon to occur (cf. especially 4:7). This would indicate a period earlier than Hebrews.

The Epistle claims to have been written by "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ" (1:1). This claim is regarded with favor by modern criticism. Many demur, but when Moffatt quite positively joins in the defence



of tradition on this point (*Intro.*, pp. 331ff.), and Bacon expresses himself favorably after giving all possible recognition to the difficulties (*Intro.*, pp. 157ff.; but cf. *Fourth Gospel*, p. 163), we have reason to feel encouraged. The fact is, "the Epistle has been handed down to us as the work of Peter . . . and it behooves us to show that this tradition is untenable" (Julicher, *Intro.* 209), if we choose to deny the apostolic authorship. But liberal criticism has not been wanting in reasons for regarding the tradition as untenable. In fact, the genius of liberal criticism has displayed a marvelous ability for finding obstructions in the path of every ancient Christian tradition. In the case of I Peter the objections throng us. There are a few which call for serious attention.

(1) It is alleged that the type of church polity reflected in the Epistle is too advanced for any period in the lifetime of the apostle. To be quite specific, I Pt. 5:1ff, mentions "elders" as having an official connection with churches addressed. But to subscribe to this objection is to impugn Ac. 11:30, where elders are represented as supervising affairs in the Jerusalem church twenty years before the date assigned to I Peter. We may also note Phil. 1:1. In fact, the notion defended by some present day critics that there was no definite official life in the primitive churches until the end of the first century is a theory suspended in mid air, having no ground save in the ingenious assumptions of the critics. They build the theory on a formidable array of "we may well suppose's", and then date the literature accordingly. That church organization was well developed at the end of the first century they admit, because I Clement reflects quite clearly such a status, and Ignatius exhibits an advancement far beyond. But are we asked to sup-

pose that the well-developed church organization of Clement's time grew up overnight? We find the first signs of official life in the churches in Acts 6, and the fully developed form in I Clement. Between these *termini* the NT documents fall into most natural order of development: Acts 11:30; Phil. 1:1; I Pt. 5:1-5; Pastoral Epistles; Heb. 13:17. Such a hypothesis has the decided advantage on scientific grounds over a theory which supposes well developed church life to have sprung up in a decade. The theory is all too clearly an invented means for denying tradition.

(2) I Peter shows clear evidence of dependence upon the Pauline Epistles, especially Eph. and Rom. It is thought quite impossible that the Apostle Peter could derive anything from Paul. While there is no explanation ready to hand as to just how he happened to have copies of these Epistles, yet we might outdo the liberals in "supposing" methods by which he might have secured them, and surely no one would attempt to defend the thesis that such a thing was impossible. And if Peter acknowledged the supreme dominance of Paul's marvelous mind and personality to the extent reflected in Gal. 2:9, 11ff., where is the difficulty in supposing that he would be influenced by the reading of one of Paul's epistles. The strange thing is, some of the critics turn this objection about and use the reverse end of it; if Peter was so influenced by Paul, why did he not mention his name? Whoever wrote the Epistle *was* influenced by Paul, and *did not* mention his name, which phenomenon is no more an enigma for Peter than for anyone else.

(3) It is asserted that it is inconceivable for an apostle to have written the Epistle and said nothing about the earthly life of Jesus. But we might remind the ob-

jectors that Peter was writing an *epistle* and not a *gospel*. What reason have we for thinking that an apostle must mention matters pertaining to the ministry of Jesus in an epistle? The fact is, "we have no evidence to establish a standard of what or how a disciple of Jesus would have written of him in a letter of exhortation addressed to a Christian church or group of churches" (Moffatt, *Intro.*, p. 334). It is quite obvious that "any apostle like Peter might presuppose an elementary acquaintance with the historical outline of the Lord's life" (*ib.*), and would therefore not need to incorporate evangelic materials in a hortatory epistle. This theory falls of its own weight when we contemplate the folly of assuming that it was *impossible* for Peter to write an epistle without referring to the earthly career of Jesus. We will see that objections are made to 2 Peter because its author did refer to facts of Jesus' life. How difficult it is for tradition to maintain itself at the bar of modern liberal criticism!

One of the very critics who stress this objection claims that the Epistle shows clear familiarity with the canonical Gospels. This, of course, is meant to include John, for we have observed above that there are "Johannine traces" in 1 Peter. Then we must suppose that the Epistle was written later than the Fourth Gospel. But, mark you, here is where one of the most adroit of modern critics falls into a contradiction. He suggests as the date of 1 Peter the year 100 A. D., and pushes the Fourth Gospel toward 110 (Julicher, *Intro.*, pp. 212, 401). Then how did the author of 1 Peter use the Fourth Gospel? Yet these liberals prate about the inconsistencies in the NT!

(4) There is one real problem that presents itself in view of the traditional authorship. It is hard to conceive

of a Galilean fisherman, called from his occupation in the prime of life, knowing no language likely except Aramaic, using the good literary Greek of this Epistle. It is not, however, utterly unreasonable to suppose that Peter could have acquired this accomplishment (cf. Moffatt, *Intro.*, p. 332). But the widely attested tradition that Peter used Mark as an interpreter in his preaching makes the probabilities against his using such Greek overwhelming. To challenge that tradition would be very questionable as a historical procedure. But when we examine the text of the Epistle the explanation lies before us. "By Silvanus, our faithful brother, as I account him, I have written unto you" (5:12). "Silvanus" is without doubt Silas of Acts (cf. 1 Thes. 1:1). He was a Hellenistic Jew, and could quite plausibly have possessed considerable Greek culture. That he was a man of ability is made likely by the fact that Paul chose him as a companion on his Second Missionary Journey. Therefore, if Peter wrote his letter "by Silvanus" as he did his preaching by Mark, we may readily understand the high quality of the Greek. The thought is Peter's; the Greek is that of Silvanus. This appears to be by all odds the best explanation of this difficulty. It is plausible, objective, convincing. It removes the only real obstacle in the way of accepting the tradition and internal claim of apostolic authorship.

The body of the epistle convincingly attests the truth of the claim in the first verse. Its pronounced Hebraistic point of view, its abundance of Jewish ideas, and its frequent use of Old Testament quotations are in harmony with the Petrine authorship. The Epistle puts great stress upon the sufferings of Jesus, which fact links it with the discourses of Peter recorded in Acts. Compare also Ac. 4:11 with 1 Pt. 2:7. But most con-

vincing are the casual and incidental marks of genuineness to be found in the book. The passing reference to his witness of the sufferings of Christ in 5:1 does not appear to be the work of a forger, but of one who knew that the barest mention would be sufficient to remind his readers of this sacred privilege and distinction. The Epistle is not doctrinal in aim, is not written to carry a point, but is a practical exhortation. Why would one in writing a message of comfort and encouragement wish to conceal his identity? And most of all, it is difficult to understand the psychology of a forger who would employ Peter's name and then ascribe a share in the Epistle to Silas. And the reference to Mark is a trace of genuineness, for we have mentioned the uniform and well supported tradition which associates him with Peter. In fact, 5:12 would be difficult to understand as part of a pseudepigraphon. There is not a book of the NT, exclusive of Rom., 1 and 2 Cor., Gal., Phils., and Philemon, which is more secure at the point of authenticity than 1 Peter.

## II PETER AND JUDE.

Here we are at the most vulnerable point in NT criticism, particularly with reference to 2 Peter. All the liberals and many conservatives have abandoned the tradition for the apostolic authorship of this book, and thereby repudiated the claim of its salutation, making it pseudepigraphic. As we approach the question, honesty and wisdom require that we confess its problematic character and test thoroughly the grounds for the defence of these books, and their right to a place in the canon.

The first problem to present itself is the dependance

of one book upon the other. This may be detected from even a mere casual reading of the two Epistles. The second chapter of 2 Peter contains almost the entire Epistle of Jude. That this is only a matter of co-incidence no candid mind could suppose. One writer has drawn upon the other. Which is the dependent one? Liberals hasten to assert that 2 Peter has incorporated Jude, but a close examination of the facts points in the other direction. Julicher, who is quite positive that 2 Peter is dependent upon Jude, nevertheless admits, "it must honestly be confessed that if we had no knowledge of Jude, we should never have suspected that an older document had been copied here" (*Intro.*, p. 238). In the closing verses of the first chapter the author is discussing in direct continuity of thought with the preceding material the question of prophecy, from which he proceeds in the second chapter, verse one, to the false prophets who have their duplicate in the heretics who are threatening the churches addressed. The continuity of thought is without a break. As to the context of Jude's use of the material, we have none to consider, for the entire body of this little epistle is composed of the second chapter of 2 Peter. In support of this, other evidences of the dependence of Jude appear. In 2 Peter the heresy is but just threatening the churches addressed, while in Jude it has already been propagated among them. 2 Peter mentions only the teachers of heresy, while Jude devotes chief attention to their disciples. "False teaching has had time to make false brethren" (Mitchell, *Heb. and Gen. Epp.*, p. 68.) These indications suggest a later date for Jude and hence its dependence on 2 Peter. This comports with the apostolic authorship of 2 Peter, for we may easily see why Jude



would use the writing of an apostle, but it would be difficult to understand Peter's use of Jude.

But there are confessedly grave difficulties in the way of accepting the apostolic authorship of 2 Peter. It appears in a very unfavorable light in ancient tradition. There are probable reflections of it beginning early in the second century, but it is first specifically mentioned by Origen, and then in doubt. Eusebius placed it in his list of "disputed" books. Jerome included it in his canon, but acknowledged the protests against it. Athanasius, Epiphanius and Augustine accepted it as genuine. Even as early as Jerome its undoubted difference in style from 1 Peter was noted. Even a novice recognizes the just objection to regarding both books as having been written in Greek by the same hand. References to "your apostles" (3:2), and to the fathers falling asleep seem unnatural as ascribed to Peter. The gravest difficulty is the mention of Paul's Epistles in connection with "the other scriptures," which seems to assign to them canonical standing on a par with the Old Testament. The earliest evidence we have of such recognition of NT writings is the time of Irenaeus, well toward the end of the second century. Thus internal and external evidence appears to prohibit the reception of 2 Peter as genuine.

But it would be not only unjust to Christian sensibilities, but unscientific to dismiss the question with the consideration of nothing more than the difficulties. We have confronting us a historical phenomenon. We turn to the NT and find one of its twenty-seven documents which has held an almost undisputed place in the canon for fifteen centuries. It opens with the simple salutation, "Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ" (1:1). If the Epistle is not genuine it is a

forgery. But as we read on it does not read like a forgery. There is an abundance of pseudo-Petrine literature coming down to us from ancient times, and a comparison will impress anyone that our canonical Epistle is decidedly superior to these apocryphal products. It was the claim of its intrinsic merit which finally brought patristic Christianity to accept it as genuine, while they permanently rejected other literature which professed to be from the hand of Peter. We have seen in our previous study of the history of patristic criticism that it was not a process of careless credulity, but of thorough and conscientious testing. What it has bequeathed to us as genuine we should be very cautious about repudiating. The incidental intimations of contact with Jesus contained in the Epistle do not impress one as the work of a forger. For instance, take 1:16, "For we did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty," and compare it with a like reference in the *Apocalypse of Peter*, "And I Peter answered and said unto him;" or, "I have spoken unto thee, Peter." The latter is clearly a conscious introduction of the pretended author's identity, while the case from the Epistle is but an incidental allusion in the course of an argument which seeks to prove a point where the author's identity is of secondary concern. The same thing is true of 1:24 and 3:1. Thus when we take a large view of the Epistle we find much that inclines to its acceptance as authentic. Then let us see if the difficulties are insuperable.

(1) *The Meagre Support of Tradition.* Though the reflections of 2 Peter in the earliest patristic literature are surprisingly scarce, yet some there are without doubt.

Even as early as Clement of Rome we find two clear parallels of thought and language (1 Clem., 9:4; 11-1). And the reason for the sparse use of the book by second century Christianity is not far to find. It contained little which would serve the doctrinal interests of that age. For this very reason we should hesitate long about placing the date of the document in the second century. Even waiving the question of authorship, cautious criticism should not go later with the date than 90-100. Accepting this as the latest possible date, there may be found several reflections of the book in the literature of the second century. Therefore, the status as to tradition is: The book is used to some extent in early Christian literature, and a plausible explanation exists for it not having been used more.

(2) *Difference in Style from I Peter.* This can but be admitted, but in our study of 1 Peter we concluded that the Greek of that Epistle was written by Silas rather than Peter. Corroboration for this theory is found in that tradition represents Peter as using Mark as his interpreter in preaching (cf. 1 Pt. 5:13). It is therefore very probable that the Greek of 2 Peter was not written by the Apostle himself, but is a rendering of his Aramaic. This will amply account for the difference in style and language.

Over against this objection we may trace some undoubted connections between the two Epistles. And these similarities are not the incidents of vocabulary and style, but the more essential matters of ideas and point of view—just what we would expect if the two Epistles were translations of Peter's Aramaic. There is the same vividness in the presentation of ideas characteristic of both Epistles. Though there are few single words

in common between the Epistles, there are many phrases and forms of expression which are similar, such as parallel expressions like "exceeding great and precious," "neither barren nor unfruitful," etc. (cf. Dods, *Intro.*, p. 210). We find in both Epistles an emphasis on the parousia, which is also an indication of early date. Thus a comparison of the two Epistles bears out the suggestion of 1 Pt. 5:12, that the Greek is not to be regarded as that of Peter, but only the thought. This removes entirely the difficulty with reference to style and vocabulary.

(3) *Internal Reflections of Late Date.* There are two intimations which are to be found in the Epistle which seem at first sight to indicate a later date than would be possible on a theory of genuineness. One is the expression in 3:4, "from the day that the fathers fell asleep." It is quite positively asserted by opponents of apostolic authorship that this refers to the first generation of Christian disciples, and places the Epistle at a date considerably after the last of them had died. The dead then would of necessity include Peter. But "fathers" does not have to refer to the first generation of Christian disciples. It seems more likely in the light of the context that no particular group is meant. The protest of these mockers at the parousia doctrine was: "Generation after generation has come and gone since the beginning of time, and still affairs move on in their normal order. What reason have we for expecting the cataclysmic change contemplated in the hope of the Second Advent?" Hence the phrase, "from the days that the fathers fell asleep," is a mode of expression rather than a designation of individuals.

A greater difficulty presents itself in 3:15, 16, where

Paul's Epistles are referred to as belonging in the class with "other scriptures." It was not until near the end of the second century that the apostolic writings were thought of as an independent canon of Christian scriptures on a par with the Old Testament. But it is also true that prior to this time the term "scripture" did not involve an idea of restricted canonicity. The Old Testament canon as a practical fact was closed, but the idea of canonicity was not crystallized. Any writings regarded as sacred might be referred to as scriptures. That Peter had the highest regard for Paul's writings and used them extensively is proved by 1 Peter. There is therefore nothing so strange after all in Peter referring to the Epistles of Paul as "scripture." This removes the gravest difficulty in the way of the apostolic authorship. Thus we may see that we still have rational grounds for believing that the Apostle Peter really wrote 2 Peter.

We may now consider briefly the authorship of Jude. The matter is not of great importance. The effort of some critics to prove this bit of sincere correspondence to be pseudepigraphic can only arise from a vicious prejudice against the evangelical view of the NT scriptures. There is not in the greeting the remotest intimation that the author wished to be taken as some conspicuous Christian. "Jude the brother of James" might be any one of many scores of individuals in the first two Christian centuries who could accurately claim that appellation. It is utterly inconceivable that a pseudepigraphon would exhibit no more effort to distinguish the exact identity of the pretended author than is found in this salutation. There is but one possible explanation for Jude 1. The writer knew that his readers would

immediately recognize and respect "Jude the brother of James," and so addressed them in that form because he himself was known to them by that description.

The only hint we have as to the identity of the author is the tradition going back to the third century that it was written by Jude the brother of James and Jesus. There is evidence that Jude was sufficiently influential for us to suppose that he could address an epistle to a church or group of churches where he was known (cf. 1 Co. 9:5), but it is hard to imagine Christian tradition, without any grounds, referring an epistle to one of so little prominence as he holds in apostolic literature. If third century Christianity were going to pick out some one to whom they might ascribe an epistle of unknown origin, surely they would decide on a name of more distinction than that of Jude the brother of Jesus. It is urged against the tradition that the heresy reflected is too late for this Jude, but the theory upon which this objection is based places the Johannine writings, the Pastoral Epistles and 2 Peter in the second century, and is forced to transfer parts of Colossians and all of Ephesians to a date too late for Paul. We must date the literature first, then decide on the period of the heresy. The folly of making theories the criteria for dates was long ago demonstrated by Baur. To assume that Jude the brother of Jesus could not have written the Greek of this Epistle can scarcely be regarded as convincing. Who knows what kind of Greek Jude might have been able to write at, say, A. D. 70? If one desires a definite identification of the author of this little Epistle, he may safely accept the one designated by ancient Christian tradition.



## HEBREWS.

There are few books in the NT on which criticism is more nearly agreed than on this one. This is possibly because we know so little about its origin, and the few glimpses we do have are in the book itself. The question of authorship must ever remain an uncertainty. Even ancient tradition was not agreed on the matter. Various theories have been maintained or suggested as to who the author was.

(1) The most ancient is that the Epistle was written by Paul. The only patristic leader who accepted this theory without qualification was Pantænus, founder of the school at Alexandria (died c. A. D. 190), and even he recognized the difficulty presented by the absence of any salutation.

(2) Another ancient view was that it was written by Paul in Aramaic, and afterward translated into Greek by one of Paul's disciples. This theory was advanced to explain the great difference in style between this and the known Epistles of Paul. Its first advocate was Clement of Alexandria. The theory cannot be regarded with any degree of favor, for the Greek of Hebrews is not translation Greek, and furthermore, the necessity for such a procedure does not appear.

(3) Origen, who found himself compelled to abandon the Pauline authorship, and who declared that the Lord only knew who wrote the Epistle, nevertheless suggested that it was written by some unknown disciple of Paul who was thoroughly trained in Paul's theology, but with a style and individuality all his own. It is suggested that this disciple might have been Luke or Clement of Rome. The former we know it could not have been, for the style is too different from Luke-Acts. As

to the latter, we do not know that he was ever a disciple of Paul. It is decidedly better to abide by the conclusion, an *unknown disciple*. This theory, with slight variations, is now accepted by the great majority of NT scholars, and seems most nearly to account for the phenomena of the Epistle.

(4) The view of ancient Christianity in the West, which is almost as old as the Pauline theory in the East, was that the Epistle was written by Barnabas, the early companion of Paul. The reason for the origin of the theory we are unable to tell. The earliest witness to it is Tertullian. Some of the greatest of modern scholars are inclined toward this view (cf. Goodspeed, *Hebrews*, pp. 9ff.). There is more internal support for it than for the Pauline theory.

(5) Martin Luther suggested that it was written by Apollos. He based his theory upon the description of Apollos in Ac. 18:24. The phenomena of the book do undoubtedly submit in a remarkable way to the features of that description. The theory has greatly impressed modern scholarship.

(6) The latest and most unique suggestion is that of Harnack that the Epistle was written by Priscilla. He presents a very ingenious argument for this view, but it has found very limited consideration by present-day criticism.

As to the date of the book, this seems to be reasonably fixed by two indications. (1) The book concerns itself with the tabernacle service rather than that of the temple, which would suggest that the temple had already been destroyed. (2) The readers had passed through one era of persecution and were threatened with an-

other (cf. 10:32ff.). The one already past was most likely the Neronian, the one threatening, the Domitian. This would place the date at about A. D. 85.

#### THE JOHANNINE EPISTLES.

The only two theories proposed for the authorship of these three Epistles which are worthy of consideration are: (1) that 1 John is by one author and 2 and 3 John by another; (2) that all three are from the same hand. The latter theory has found the support of the majority of scholars. It is also true that the majority favor a common authorship for the First Epistle and the Fourth Gospel. The matter may be well summed up in the words of Julicher: "But for us the fact is all the more certain that the writer of the First Epistle of John is identical with the writer of the Fourth Gospel. The relationship between the two documents, with all their outward difference in form, is most striking" (*Intro.*, p. 247). Thus it may be seen that the dominant direction of critical opinion is toward the conclusion that the same hand wrote the Gospel and Epistles. This is without any doubt the safe position for cautious criticism. Then the probability which we found in connection with the Fourth Gospel may be applied to the Epistles. They were all written by the Apostle John. This agrees with the unanimous testimony of ancient tradition. There are also evidences in the Epistles themselves which support this view. We have observed above (p. 197) that the survival of 2 and 3 John can best be understood on the supposition that they were written by an Apostle. "It is very unlikely, indeed, that they would ever have been preserved, if they had not been invested with authority from the first in the community

or communities to which they were addressed" (McClymont, *NT. Crit.*, p. 196). To this we may add a striking evidence which we have in the comparison of 2 Jn. 10, 11, with Mk. 9:38.

The date of the Epistles may be placed near that of the Gospel, at about A. D. 90-95. I John was probably written after the Gospel; the other two Epistles present no means for determining comparative dates.

#### THE APOCALYPSE.

This book presents as great variety of problems as any book of the NT. We have space here for only the more important, which we may group under the three heads: structure, author, date.

(1) *Structure*. In this particular apocalyptic literature was in a class to itself. The imagery of apocalypse was common property, and freely adopted from one author by another. Frequently an entire group of figures, or a small apocalypse, was incorporated by another writer. We saw (p. 115) that the apocalypse known as I Enoch was in reality a compilation of many smaller documents or fragments. To what extent has this practice affected the book of Revelation? This question involves both its sources and its unity.

*a.* There are three general theories advanced in explaining the sources of the book. (*a*) That it is made up exclusively of objective visions, miraculously conveyed to the Apostle John in the ecstatic experience of his abode on Patmos. This is the ultra-supernaturalist view. A frank and thorough examination of the actual phenomena of the book, in the light of apocalyptic customs, convinces one that the theory ignores many of the facts. (*b*) That it is made up exclusively of Jewish

apocalyptic and Gentile myths. This theory is at the other extreme from the first. It fails to find support in the material of the book itself. (c) That it is a result of reflection upon Old Testament prophecy, current Jewish apocalyptic conceptions, and the critical conditions at that time existing for Christianity, the whole process guided and used by the Holy Spirit. When we come to actual interpretation of Revelation we find that this is the hypothesis which best explains its contents, and hence the one most likely to be true.

b. If we accept the last mentioned theory as to sources, we are already well on the way toward settling the question of its unity. We would necessarily regard the entire book in its essential structure as the work of a single hand. This, however, has been denied by many critics. The mania for dissection has wrought more havoc in Revelation than in any other NT book. Some regard it as a compilation of a number of more or less independent documents and fragments by a succession of editors. Others regard the book as a collection of Jewish apocalypses reworked by a Christian hand. A third form of the compilation theory, which presents some claim on our consideration, is that it is in the main a literary unit, but the author has incorporated fragments from other sources. (Cf. Moffatt, *Intro.*, pp. 489ff.) A modification of the last mentioned theory probably represents the truth. A single author composed the book, consciously or unconsciously influenced by his wide familiarity with Jewish apocalyptic.

(2) *Author.* The book claims to have been written by "John" (1:1,4,9). This name was about as common in ancient times as it is in modern, so we ask in much bewilderment, What John? Tradition answers

very positively, The Apostle, son of Zebedee. Andreas of Cæsarea (c. 450) quite likely intimates that Papias regarded the Apocalypse as coming from the pen of the Apostle John. This would push the testimony back to 125. Justin Martyr says quite expressly that the book was by the hand of "a certain man, whose name was John, one of the Apostles of Christ" (*Dial.*, 81). Irenæus is quite positive in repeatedly stating his view to the same effect. The Muratorian canon subscribes to the same opinion. In fact, this was the practically unanimous verdict of second century tradition. In the third century some objections were raised, but even there the overwhelming testimony favors the apostolic authorship. As a matter of fact, there are few books in the NT which have stronger support from ancient tradition.

In the presence of this very convincing witness of tradition one would feel constrained to accept the apostolic authorship without hesitation, but for one grave difficulty. The book is strikingly different from the Fourth Gospel, which tradition ascribes to the same author. Yet with the differences there are also some pronounced similarities. Exceedingly attractive is the observation of Moffatt, "The relationship of the two books is best solved by attributing them to the same school or circle in Asia Minor but to different authors" (*Intro.*, 501). To assume, as some do, that the author of the Apocalypse was the Apostle, and that the Gospel and Epistles were written by another John very closely associated with him, offers a most inviting solution. But we are not yet compelled to abandon the hypothesis that the five books ascribed to him were written by the hand of the Apostle John. If, however, one must surrender the theory of common authorship, the balance of tra-



ditional evidence turns the Apocalypse to the Apostle, and the hypothesis of the Presbyter John, a contemporary of the Apostle, becomes the most satisfactory as an explanation of the Gospel and Epistles

The differences between the Gospel and Apocalypse have really been very much exaggerated. Even Julicher admits that there are "certain indisputable signs of connection" (*Intro.*, p. 279). There are several characteristic Greek terms of frequent occurrence in both, and at least two which occur in these books and nowhere else in the NT. Revelation contains the characteristic Johannine figures of the water of life, the vine, the shepherd, and the idea of spiritual attainment as a "victory." It represents Jesus as the "Logos," a very significant similarity. The Savior is referred to as "Lamb" in both, though a different Greek word is used (*amnos* in the Gospel and *arnion* in Rev.). Striking parallels in phraseology may be found, as in Rev. 2:27 cf. John 10:18. When we find this abundance of internal evidence supporting a strong traditional testimony, the effect is to convince the conservative student that we do not yet have to surrender the view of a single author.

A serious obstacle in the way of the theory of common authorship is proposed in the eschatology of the Apocalypse. It is claimed that the Fourth Gospel is utterly indifferent toward the current eschatological views, which furnish all the substance of Revelation. That the Fourth Gospel stresses present spiritual realities rather than future anticipations can not be disputed, but that this difference makes the viewpoint of the two books irreconcilable can not be proved. The First Epistle constitutes the bridge to span the seeming chasm. It can not be denied that a groundwork of profound eschatological conviction forms a basis for such expressions

as "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever;" "Little children, it is the last hour;" "that, if he shall be manifested, we may have boldness, and not be ashamed before him at his coming;" "We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him" (1 Jn. 2:17, 18, 28; 3:2). The link with the Fourth Gospel is found in 1:51, "Ye shall see the heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." Thus we may move from the Apocalypse, by way of the First Epistle, direct to John 1:51, and reconcile the apparent incompatibility at the point of eschatology. The eschatological emphasis of the Apocalypse does not render it impossible for it to have been written by the author of the Fourth Gospel.

(3) *Date*. All agree that the Apocalypse was written during a period of severe persecution in the first century. Hence scholars place it at either the Neronian persecution (64-67), or during the last great wave of the Domitian persecution (95-96). Some advocate the theory that part of the material originated during the Neronian persecution and was employed by the author of the Apocalypse at the later period, but the evidence for this is not conclusive. The chief argument for the earlier date is based upon chapter 11, which seems to assume that the Temple was still standing. But when we recall that we are dealing with apocalyptic imagery and not historical description we conclude that this has no necessary bearing on the date. The majority of scholars now agree that the book was written at A. D. 95-96. This date undoubtedly accords best with the internal evidence as a whole, as well as having the support of tradition.

Thus it appears that we may accept all the NT literature ascribed by ancient tradition to the primitive disciples. We are now ready for our third and last problem in the study of primitive Christian thought.

### III. SOURCES.

We have before us now the records of the earliest Christian thought as they are given in the book of Acts, and its later products in the NT Epistles. Chronologically these Epistles are arranged as follows: James, 50-51; 1 Peter, 63-64; 2 Peter, 66-67; Jude, 70-75; Hebrews, 85-86; Johannine Epistles 90-95; Revelation, 95-96. The final task of criticism is to discern the origin from which this thought arose, or the factors which produced it. Our object is to determine as nearly as possible just how much it is dependent on Jesus, and just how accurately it gives to us the impression made by our Lord upon his original followers. To do this we must incidentally make use of the contents of primitive Christian thought, but it does not belong to our task to undertake specifically an analysis and presentation of its components: that is the province of Biblical Theology. We shall use here those elements which are perfectly obvious, and which have the general approval of Biblical Theology.

Since the data we have before us covers a period of more than six decades, from about A. D. 30 to 95, we shall find new factors affecting this thought at different stages of its progress. Our method will be to start with the latest type, and as we indicate its sources we will of necessity be carried back to the origin of the most primitive type. The very limited space which we have to devote to this matter prohibits anything approaching an exhaustive investigation. As much as we can do is to mention the sources which are discoverable in

primitive Christian thought and indicate the general character and extent of their contribution. We may distinguish four such sources: Hellenistic thought and life; the influence of Paul; pre-Christian Judaism, particularly as represented in Palestine; and the influence and teaching of Jesus.

1. *Hellenism.*

Christianity did its first planting on Jewish soil, but it did not long retain that field. One leading purpose of the book of Acts is to show how the transition from Jew to Gentile took place. Standard Judaism struck at the firebrand to extinguish it, but instead, scattered its blazing fagots to the ends of the earth. Many of the fugitive disciples, being already of Hellenistic sympathies, "spoke unto the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus" (Ac. 11:20). This single statement recites the most important chapter in apostolic history, the chapter which ushered in the Gentile mission and the contact of Christianity with the world of Greek thought and custom.

What results came to Christianity itself from this contact? The data are in hand for the answer, so we have no need to vainly speculate. But some do deliberately turn from the abundant data which lie directly before us, seize a few scattered fragments from more remote and uncertain sources, dealing with religions about which we know but little, draw elaborate inferences from these fragments, and cast the whole question into the realm of speculation. They formulate their own theory of the processes by which first century Christianity developed, and then interpret the NT in conformity with this theory. This whole procedure is utterly superfluous. We have in the NT the monuments

of primitive Christian thought, and in the literature of antiquity the monuments of first century Greek thought. If we make the NT the starting point, go thence to the great abundance of philosophical and historical literature of the Græco-Roman world, and relate to the results thus achieved the fragmentary evidences of the oriental religions, we arrive at a convincing and dependable answer. By this method we are able to discern the real connections and to determine approximately the character and extent of the contribution of Hellenism to Christianity.

(1) It was manifestly inevitable that Christianity, in the expression of its message to the Græco-Roman world of its day, should use the language, modes of expression, and thought forms which were current. These were the product of Greek literature and culture. Terms widely used in the Hellenistic world were employed by apostolic leaders to convey Christian ideas, such as the *Logos* of the Johannine writings. Preaching as a means of propagating truth was already a well-established custom among the people of the first century. The *epistle* as a form of literary expression was not unknown, though apostolic practice gave it a place in the history of literature which it could never otherwise have held. Thus Hellenism provided primitive Christianity with convenient and proficient vehicles of thought. As the first preachers of the Gospel approached the Græco-Roman world with their message of redemption, they did the only wise thing: they adopted the means of expression which were already familiar to that world, and hence could be used most effectively.

(2) Connections between Christianity and Hellenistic philosophy are clearly discernible. This influence af-

fected the application of some Christian terms; e. g., faith, which in Jewish use signified personal trust, but in Greek use denoted acceptance of a proposition or a system of thought. "Wisdom" and "Knowledge" acquired new meaning from Hellenistic associations. All other terms used to express Christian ideas which coincided with Greek philosophical conceptions would inevitably gather added significance from their Hellenistic associations. The result of this was both to enrich the idea and lend greater force to the word.

Much has been said, *pro* and *con*, about the effect of Greek philosophy upon Christian ethics. That the influence was very considerable is doubtful for two reasons. In the first place, the ethical idealism of Christianity was far superior to anything in Greek philosophy when it first left the lips of Jesus, and hence could gain but little from an inferior source. In the second place, Greek philosophy had very little in common with first century Christianity. "The earliest forms of Christianity were not only outside the sphere of Greek philosophy, but they also appealed, on the one hand, mainly to the classes which philosophy did not recognize." (Hatch, *Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages Upon the Christian Church*, p. 124). Greek philosophy had no thought of ethics as based upon divine authority, an idea which was fundamental in the Christian view.

Yet we can not deny that there is some relation existing between Christian ethics and Greek philosophy. Many of the highest ideals and best interpretations of life and duty advocated by Hellenistic philosophers—particularly the Stoics—were likewise urged by the Christian teachers. To suppose that the two moral systems remained side by side for so long a time in the ancient world and yet remained wholly independent, in



spite of such pronounced points of contact, posits a miracle for which there is no reasonable explanation. And why should not Greek philosophy have contributed to the ethics of primitive Christianity? Whatever of truth there was in its ideas could not be rejected from the Christian revelation. In fact, when one comes to contemplate the remarkably pure and elevated ideals found in Hellenistic philosophy, he is led to ask, How could primitive Christianity have repudiated them? The apostolic message must of necessity incorporate the gold of truth, even if it had to rescue it from the dross of error and superstition. To one who regards truth as an absolute reality, all these movements in the Apostolic Age are but methods of the divine activity in preparing for the world the gospel of redemption. But if one views truth as a relative and unstable matter, governed by the incidents of historical development, he sees in this process only the fortuitous combination of homogeneous elements by a method of evolution.

(3) The application to Christianity of the science of Comparative Religions has caused several modern critics to claim that they find in it a number of elements derived from its pagan religious environment. It is true that some of the religious ideas stressed by Christianity did prevail among the other religions of the Græco-Roman world of the first century, but these same ideas have been present more or less distinctly in all the known religious history of mankind. They are the inevitable outgrowth of the instinctive craving of the human soul—a desire for a tangible revelation from God, communion with the divine, and redemption from the present desolate lot of the race. These great queries of the soul were most satisfactorily answered in Christ.

Therefore, the real relation of primitive Christianity to its religious environment was that it satisfied the yearnings which had given rise to the pagan religions, and because it adequately met the religious demands of the age it triumphed over its rivals. "It is not difficult to understand how another type of religion which contemplated the salvation of the individual rather than of the nation and based its assurance upon a more exclusively divine Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ultimately made a far stronger appeal to many people in the Græco-Roman world" (Case, *Evolution of Early Christianity*, p. 238).

## 2. *Pauline Influence.*

Practically all Christian history and literature after A. D. 60 bears the impress of Paul. So great was his personality and so intense his devotion to "the gospel" that all the Christian thought of his age came under the influence of his colossal mind. We have already noticed that 1 Peter exhibits in a marked degree the influence of Paul, and that the Fourth Gospel—and the same is true to some extent of the Johannine Epistles—presents a developed Paulinism. There is a pronounced Pauline cast to the thought of Hebrews. Some scholars profess even to see traces of Pauline influence in the little Epistle of Jude, but the evidence is not very obvious.

Paul's distinctive contribution was to give clearer definition to the fundamental Christian conceptions. For instance, the idea reflected in the early chapters of Acts that certain benefits accrued to the believer from the death of Christ is formulated by Paul into his doctrine of vicarious atonement. The primitive Christian idea, from a Jewish source, of the vitiation of human

nature by sin becomes Paul's distinctive doctrine of original sin. The general conception of God's free grace in salvation was given clear definition by Paul. It is Paul's definition of these great ideas which we find dominant in primitive Christian thought during the closing decades of the first century.

### 3. *Judaism.*

Some modern critics are fond of describing Christianity as merely a higher Judaism. This view would retain Jesus in the bounds of Judaism and make the original disciples nothing more than a Jewish sect. The severance of Christianity from Judaism they would represent as occurring after Paul and other Hellenists had broken down the middle wall of partition and admitted the Gentiles. But it becomes a very difficult and intricate task, productive of a vague and confused impression, when one seeks to find the break of Christianity with Judaism wholly subsequent to the crucifixion (cf. Case, *Evolution of Early Christianity*, pp. 123ff.). That new issues arose which widened the breach no one would deny, and it is also true that the apostles at first regarded Jesus as a Jewish Messiah and the temporal deliverer of Israel (cf. Ac. 1:6), but that they knew him only in the terms of standard Judaism of their day would be a difficult position to maintain. The impression left by the NT is undoubtedly the correct one, that the disciples of Jesus accepted him as conveying a new revelation from God, which was to supersede any former relation of Jehovah with Israel. Israel was regarded as the favored recipient of this revelation, but the revelation itself was something new and distinct.

The chasm between Judaism and primitive Christianity was created by Jesus himself. The Sermon on

the Mount, coming as it does about the center of the ministry, was also central in his teaching, and it marks a cleavage with Judaism so positive and plain as to be beyond reasonable controversy. Yet there are those who would have us regard the Sermon on the Mount as but an expression—though a rather remarkable expression, it is granted—of some of the best elements in Rabbinic Judaism. That many thought forms and terms of Rabbinic Judaism are employed we may admit, but as to just how far Jesus in this message builds upon Judaism of his day we may see by examining the record in Matthew (5:1ff.). The Beatitudes present a familiar rabbinic form of teaching, but their ideals are utterly different from those of the rabbis. They said, "Blessed are those who are loyal to the traditions of Israel, for they shall see God." Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Mt. 5:8). He then declares that for their loyalty to those new ideals his disciples will be persecuted. He does announce his mission as a fulfillment rather than an abrogation of the law and the prophets, but this fulfillment involves a righteousness which is superior to that of the scribes and Pharisees, the authoritative exponents of Judaism. Then follows that series of remarkable expressions, "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, . . . but I say unto you" (Mt. 5:21ff.). These startling verses mark an uncompromising break with Judaism, and a launching of the ministry of Jesus upon his own independent authority. They are followed by a caustic diatribe against the very practices which were held in highest honor by the leaders of the Jewish nation. It is clear that the Sermon on the Mount brought a decisive and final cleavage of the ministry of Jesus from traditional Judaism.

Yet it was not so much what Jesus *taught* concerning God and men's relation to Him and to one another that brought about his breach with Judaism, but what he *claimed* relative to himself and his relation to the Father. But since the Messianic claim was the basis of the Messianic teaching, and the teaching the articulation of the claim, we are but splitting hairs to no avail when we seek to make any rigid distinction between the two. The fact is, it was the person of Jesus which created the cleft. *He* was the supreme offense to the Pharisees, *he* was the embodiment of all that was antithetical to what they conceived to be orthodox Judaism. Hence the cause of the rift was Jesus, rather than distinctly his teachings or his claims. We may therefore accept it as true that the breach occurred between the Jews and Christianity "primarily because it ascribed to Jesus a dignity which in their eyes he did not deserve" (Case, *Ev. of Early Christianity*, p. 164). It was that which resided in Jesus himself and the interpretation of him by his disciples which made Christianity a distinct religion.

This breach between Christianity and Judaism does not mean, however, that Christianity derived nothing from the Jews. The divine choice of Israel had as its chief end preparing a race who should inaugurate the movement designed for the world's redemption. God did not desert this race during the interbiblical period, but exercised over them a providential supervision which provided many elements to be used in the gospel program. Most of these elements had to be very greatly modified before they could become a fit contribution to Christianity, but the fact remains that they came origi-

nally from Judaism. These Jewish factors in the production of Christianity may be grouped under four heads.

(1) Judaism exerted a decided influence over what we may call the formal expression of the Christian religion; that is, matters of organization and ritual. The order of service adopted in Christian worship was based upon the synagogue service of the Jews. The synagogue fostered a community life which became an important characteristic of Christianity, though the Greek influence seems to have been dominant in this particular, since the word *ekklesia* was adopted as the expression of the community life. The Jewish Diaspora made possible the great missionary activity of primitive Christianity, and the greater liberty of spirit created in the Hellenistic Jews by their Gentile contact prepared the soil for the missionary impulse (cf. Ac. 11:20).

The elements of its ceremonial expression Christianity certainly derived from Judaism. The Lord's Supper grew out of the Passover feast, and is made clear by the Gospels. It is maintained by a few critics of the present day that this Christian ordinance came from the festivals of oriental religions, but this view proves untenable when we come to a careful examination of the facts. The heathen feasts were different in character, purpose and significance from the Christian ordinance, the only point in common between them being that in each case there was in a sense a sacred meal. Baptism was historically connected with the immersion of Gentile proselytes as part of their initiation into Judaism. It was adopted by John the Baptist as the distinguishing ritual requirement of his ministry, and through him became introduced into Christianity.



(2) The crucial point in any religion is in its view of man and his relation to God. This determines the effectiveness of its practical application. In this particular Christianity derived much from Judaism, but had much more which was superior to Judaism. In its ideas of sin and righteousness primitive Christian thought was far in advance of the Jewish conceptions, especially with regard to the latter. Judaism, under the influence of the Old Testament, viewed sin largely as a breach of the Covenant with Jehovah, and hence primarily an act of rebellion. In this view the NT agrees. The Christian doctrine of original sin, or sin as a fundamental vitiation of human nature, especially as set forth by Paul, finds some points of contact with later Judaism, but is even there rather vaguely presented. The NT view of sin as primarily a matter of motive is a decided advance beyond Judaism.

In the matter of righteousness, primitive Christian thought exhibits a complete revolt against the Jewish view. To the Jew righteousness was little more than *nomism*, formal compliance with requirements of law. This view Jesus rejected and heartily condemned and was followed in his attitude by the primitive disciples. For Christianity righteousness was a vital matter of life, an attitude of mind, a spiritual principle.

The idea of transmitted merit, involved in the atoning work of Christ and the imputation of his righteousness, found a basis in Jewish thought. The thought of the earliest disciples, as reflected in Acts, did not go so far as Paul in describing the actual righteousness of Christ's life as imputed to the believer, *but did regard the believer as benefited by the death of Christ* (Ac. 2:23, 24; 3:18; 4:10-12, 27, 28; 5:30, 31; 10:39ff.). Modern critics in their reaction against the view of a vicarious

atonement have sought to show that there is not in the discourses in Acts 1-12 any view of the death of Christ as affecting the believer. But in the passages just cited the association between the fact of Christ's death and his saving efficacy will impress any open mind that a connection was thought to exist there. That these primitive disciples had not at the beginning formulated a full and consistent doctrine of the atonement need scarcely be mentioned, the fact with its reasons is so obvious. But they did place great stress on the death of Christ, and why? We have three sources of light on this question. The intimations of the discourses themselves point to the conceptions of a benefit accruing to the believer from the death of Christ. Unless we regard Paul's view as a novelty in Christian circles, a most improbable thing, we must think of it as having a primitive basis of some sort. Finally, the idea finds an original foundation in rabbinic theology (cf. Schechter, *Some Aspects of Rabbinic Theology*, pp. 170ff.).

There is no question that Christianity inherited from Judaism its idea of a written revelation, and even that written revelation itself in the form of the Old Testament. That the primitive disciples regarded the Old Testament scriptures as inspired is made positively certain by the NT, but the conception of a definite, closed canon does not appear. We may, however, regard some such notion as canonicity to be implied in expressions which seem to contemplate the "scriptures" as a definite group of writings. That the limits were regarded as final we have no conclusive evidence. It was in all probability this plastic state of the conception of a canon which made it possible for the NT to become a part of the Christian's Bible.

The doctrine of angelic mediation, so prevalent in

later Judaism, found no place in primitive Christian thought. The Jewish view of the absolute transcendence of God made it necessary that there should be some intermediary means of communication with Him. This necessary medium was supplied by the angelic creation. The conception appears in the background of Hebrews, but is not sanctioned by the author, being only used as an *ad hominem* argument. The NT doctrine of angels is rather like that of the Old Testament, being much more sane and simple than the elaborate views of contemporary Judaism.

(3) The basal substance of Christianity's doctrine of God was inherited from Judaism. Monotheism, divine transcendence, and the moral character of God, distinguishing features of the Christian conception, came from the Old Testament, and were bequeathed to Christianity by the Jews. At one point primitive Christian thought, under the influence of Jesus, made a distinct advance; namely, in the spirituality of its conception of God. But later Judaism had made progress in the same direction. The removal of emphasis from the temple to the synagogue, and from the priest to the rabbi, engendered a more spiritual conception of God which prepared the way for the Christian view.

There were some hypostatic distinctions made in the divine being by Judaism which provided a historical basis for the Christian conception of the Trinity. Even in the Old Testament we find the Spirit of God or of Jehovah, and "the Angel Jehovah," and in early Judaism there appears the personification of wisdom. The *Logos* of Philo is sometimes treated practically as a person, though Philo is not clear in his representation of this idea. There was a sort of latent Trinitarianism in

the Jewish view of God. But no one can deny that the NT presents these distinctions in a way which sets it apart from all former conceptions. Though we should be cautious about ascribing to NT writers any systematically formulated doctrine of the Trinity, yet they do set forth the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as quite distinct conceptions. That the Son is regarded as distinct in personality from the Father there can be no doubt, and there is something more than merely "an evident advance of the hypostatic conception of the spirit within the New Testament" (Toy, *Judaism and Christianity*, p. 95), there is the clear ascription to the Holy Spirit of qualities and functions which are definitely personal. It is certain that the view of God in primitive Christian thought may most accurately be described as a Trinitarian conception. In this particular Christianity went quite beyond Judaism.

(4) Of prime importance in this discussion is the relation between the Jewish and Christian doctrines of the kingdom of God. The conception was a part of Christianity's heritage from Judaism, but there were pronounced differences between them on the matter. In the early life of Israel the kingdom of God was purely national. Israel and the kingdom of God were synonyms. This widened in the later prophetic view to a reign of Jehovah over all nations, but with Israel still central. In earlier Judaism the conception was a theocratic world government with Israel at the head of the nations, a further development of the later prophetic view. The later Jewish view was prevailingly apocalyptic, expecting this theocratic world government to be ushered in and established by the coming of a personal Messiah. The Christian view had vital connec-

tions with this Jewish apocalyptic view, but differed greatly in the ethical and spiritual nature of its conception of the kingdom of God. The expectancy of the early return of Jesus, so conspicuous in primitive Christian thought, is distinctly apocalyptic.

But while the apocalyptic ideas of Judaism affected primitive Christian thought, the estimate and application of this form of religious conception was quite distinct. Jewish apocalyptic, especially in its extremer forms, turned in utter despair from the present world, abandoned it to its terrible fate, and centered all hope in a new age soon to be ushered in. These are the characteristics of what we may call a disappointed apocalypticism. On the other hand, primitive Christianity set about to better the world in which it found itself. Moral instruction and present religious experience were accorded a large place in its teaching. Conspicuous examples of this are James and 1 Peter. These Epistles deal almost entirely with the proper adjustment of the Christian to his present world situation, and the former is the earliest extant literary product of primitive Christianity. Both are in sympathy, however, with the apocalyptic faith (cf. Jas. 5:7, 8; 1 Pt. 4:7). It is also to be noted that there is but one distinctive apocalypse in the NT. The Epistles are dominantly concerned with vital matters of present experience.

The thing which most distinguished the Christian conception of the Kingdom of God was the place given to the vicarious sacrifice of Christ. Primitive Christian thought built mainly, not upon the heavenly Messiah of Daniel 7:13, 14, but upon the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53. The primitive disciples believed their Lord reigned because he went down to death and came forth triumphant, and that it all took place according to the



plan of God (cf. Ac. 2:23, 24). The crucified and risen Jesus was the one who, in primitive Christian thought, achieved the establishment of the Kingdom of God. This view could have come only from an impression made by Jesus himself, for "we must emphasize strongly . . . that in the whole of Judaism, down to Jesus' time, no trace of a suffering Messiah is to be found" (Hollmann, *Jewish Religion in the Time of Jesus*, p. 85).

Christian eschatology was derived entirely from Judaism. The view of a heavenly home as the eternal destiny of the righteous, and a place of unending torture for the wicked finds abundant expression in Jewish literature. Resurrection and judgment were also prominent ideas in Judaism. These matters, which belong to the essential nature of religion, God revealed in the consciousness of His people before the coming of His Son. The fact that they are pre-Christian does not affect their intrinsic truth.

#### 4. *The Influence of Jesus.*

We have seen in the foregoing section that, while Judaism furnished a historical basis for Christianity, the message of the Apostolic Age in its most vital particulars far transcended anything which Judaism had been able to produce, even by its best and purest characters. This advance of primitive Christian thought beyond Judaism is explained by a simple word—*Jesus*. That all which is distinctive in early Christian life and thought came from him, none would now attempt to dispute. His conception of God and society, and their inter-relations, stamped itself indelibly upon the heart of primitive Christianity and defined its entire religious horizon. The ethical and spiritual emphasis which so distin-



guished the Christian movement, grew originally out of the consciousness of Jesus. Of such nature he conceived his Kingdom—the Kingdom of God—to be. The conception which the primitive disciples had of him as the spiritual redeemer of mankind (cf. Ac. 3:19-26) grew out of his teaching and the impression which he made upon them. It could have had no other source, for Judaism did not so regard the Messiah, and this conception of Jesus appears before Hellenistic thought had any contact with Christianity.

One deeply significant fact in primitive Christianity which has been almost ignored in critical study of the first century is that all its ideas developed upon a basis of *experience*. Primitive Christian "theology" is by no means a metaphysical effort at formulating a system of theories, but a practical interpretation of elements which had arisen in consciousness. That this state of consciousness had been created by Jesus and his teaching cannot be disputed. The constituent elements of this new experience in Christ received through the advancing decades of the first century have a progressive interpretation. *This interpretation was composed in the terms of the life with which Christianity came in contact; the experience was the essential basis, the fixed quantity.* And it was just this experience, this fundamental essence, which came from Jesus. The forms and terms of primitive Christian thought, which were inevitably affected by environment, were the incidents accompanying the expression of this experience.

While this fact provides a fixed quantity as the dependable foundation upon which the Christian religion rests, we are unable to see the force of the objection that according to this view "there was no vital interaction between essential Christianity and contemporary

life during the course of history" (Case, *Ev. of Early Christianity*, p. 18). Interaction there was, and has ever been—indeed, ever will be—but its results have obtained in the externals of Christianity, and have not modified its original essence, which is *a response of consciousness to a certain view of Jesus*. This inner experience has continued as an unbroken chain through all the Christian centuries, and binds us today with the original disciples of Jesus, but the form and mode of expression in Christian thought has changed with the advance of the centuries. This change in the trappings of Christian experience represents its interaction with historical environment.

This view of the origin of Christianity entirely annuls the objection, "Then a particular quantity of instruction, especially communicated to certain individuals and passed on by them to their successors constitutes the substance of the new religion" (Case, *op. cit.*, p. 26). The truth is, Christianity is not a mere *quantity of instruction*. Its fundamental fixed quantity is a vital fact of life, *an experience which issues from Christ*. It is the life which imparts permanent value and authority to the teaching. Though one who objects to the idea of a fundamental norm in religion may contend that the attainments of a particular age, however valuable, cannot be accepted as final, and that hence the Christ of primitive Christian thought cannot be our Savior, yet the fact remains incontrovertible for Christianity that its basis lies in an experience created by a certain view of Jesus coming down from the Apostolic Age, a belief in him as Redeemer and Friend, which belief alone can produce the state of consciousness which we denote as "Christian experience."

There are some who would have us think of Chris-

tianity as the product of a general fusion of the most vigorous religious ideas of the Græco-Roman world of the first century; a conglomerate of Judaism, Hellenism, and oriental mysteries; an aggregation of religious accidents; so far departing from the simple and rather crude apocalypticism of Jesus that only a few rather obscure lines of connection remain. According to this view, Jesus marks the genesis of Christianity only as a starting point; he by no means defines its character. The conversion of the early adherents of Christianity is defined by this school of critics as "embracing the new religion" or "espousing the new movement." This indicates their wholly inadequate conception of the true nature of the case. Conversion then was of the same fundamental nature that it is now. It was a spiritual transformation, a change in the dominant disposition and direction of the mind, a transaction which could be figuratively described as a new birth, or a new creation in Christ Jesus. Therefore, the disciples made by primitive Christianity did not merely come to a formal and intellectual acceptance of the tenets preached by the Christian missionaries, thus necessitating that elements of their former religious views be incorporated in the Christian message to form a point of contact. *The contact was made by the Spirit of God.* They experienced a radical change within, and it was a consciousness of this new state of mind and not a perfunctory "espousing of the new religion" which made them adherents of Christianity. They would therefore retain only those elements of their former pagan cult which would become convenient in apprehending and expressing this great new experience. The ultimate historical genesis of this experience was the impression made by Jesus upon his disciples.

No matter how much one may be enamored of the "historical method" of treating the origin of Christianity, he has no right to ignore the fact that the ultimate foundation of early Christian thought and life was what they believed about Jesus, and the issue of this belief in an experience of transformation. All the environmental elements which accrued to primitive Christianity were but incidents in its propagation. From beginning to end of the Apostolic Age its essence persisted in Christ, of whom its conceptions continued to be ever more and more exalted. "Of no other being who ever trod this earth has such language as is applied again and again to Jesus ever been used" (Malden, *Problems of the NT*, p. 118). It was this exalted view of Jesus which created and perpetuated the Christian religion. He is center and circumference, foundation and superstructure, "all and in all."

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE LITERATURE OF PAUL.

There are in the NT fourteen epistles ascribed by tradition to Paul. Thirteen of these bear his name, and the one exception, which is Hebrews, has so much evidence against its Pauline authorship that criticism has now almost unanimously concluded that it could not have been written by Paul. Of the thirteen bearing his name, four—Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Romans—have remained unchallenged, except by a few extremely radical critics whose opinions have no weight. Practically all NT scholars agree with Bacon that their “internal character might well be assumed to make suspicion forever impossible” (*Intro. to NT*, p. 13). 1 Thessalonians, Philippians and Philemon are now almost unanimously accepted, though in the past their authenticity has been questioned. A few liberals deny the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians, and regard Colossians as Pauline material reworked by an editor. The majority of liberals deny the genuineness of Ephesians outright, and ascribe it to the editor of Colossians. The Pastoral Epistles have suffered the severest criticism, though a genuine Pauline nucleus is admitted for 2 Timothy. The problems raised with reference to these books we will now consider in detail.

#### THE THESSALONIAN EPISTLES.

The critical security of 1 Thessalonians may be regarded as a settled matter. Its internal evidences of genuineness place it beyond controversy, not to mention the

strong patristic witness. The objections raised against it are too fanciful to be worthy of consideration. But the case is different for 2 Thessalonians. The traditional evidence is certainly as strong for it, but the internal proof is not quite so undeniably balanced in its favor. Two difficulties have been presented as in the way of accepting its genuineness.

(1) The objection upon which the greatest stress is laid calls in question the eschatology. This is said to be un-Pauline and contradictory to 1 Thessalonians. The eschatological conceptions of Apostolic Christianity were common property, and derived largely from Judaism, as we have seen above, and we cannot therefore speak of any eschatological system as distinctly Pauline. Then if there was no peculiarly Pauline eschatology, it is not possible to brand a certain conception as un-Pauline. Paul did not mold his eschatology; he received it ready-made. As to the relation of its eschatology to 1 Thessalonians, the theory of contradiction cannot be maintained (cf. Julicher, *Intro.*, pp. 65ff.). It was designed to be contradictory to a false interpretation of 1 Thessalonians, and the same strained interpretation which wrought the damage in Thessalonica is urged by some modern critics. When properly interpreted the two books are not contradictory.

(2) Great suspicion is aroused among the objectors to this Epistle by the reference in 2:2 to a forged epistle. It is contended, and with some force, that it is hardly conceivable that a forged epistle would have been circulated in Paul's own lifetime. Hence they conclude that the author of 2 Thessalonians was seeking to cast doubt upon the genuine Epistle and displace it with his own, because of objectionable features in the



eschatology of 1 Thessalonians. But we do not know that the forged epistle was actually being circulated, but only that Paul suspected it, and it is certainly going too far to say that such a thing was inconceivable. It is far more improbable that a spurious epistle could have been issued about the end of the first century—the approximate date suggested—in an effort to supplant 1 Thessalonians, and have been received into Christian circles and placed by the side of the genuine Epistle. This does impress one as just about unthinkable.

When we consider the strong witness of tradition in favor of the Epistle, and the fact that “the style is so thoroughly Pauline that one might indeed admire the forger who could imitate it so ingeniously” (Julicher, *Intro.*, p. 62), we conclude that in comparison the objections raised are not sufficient to cast any doubt upon the Pauline authorship.

## GALATIANS.

That Paul wrote this Epistle may be regarded as the unanimous opinion of NT scholarship. The exceptions have not made enough impression to deserve notice. The question of the time and place at which the Epistle was written, and the readers for whom it was intended are the problems to be considered.

1. The views of critics relative to the time and place vary considerably. Some regard the Epistle as the first written by Paul; but the great majority would place it between the Thessalonian and Corinthian Epistles; while a few, because of its close resemblance to Romans in doctrinal content, would date it just previous to that Epistle. The places suggested are: Corinth, near the close of the Second Missionary Journey; Antioch, be-

tween the Second and Third Journeys; Ephesus, during the three years spent there; and Macedonia or Corinth, near the end of the Third Journey. It is clear that the matter is in a very unsettled state. Ramsay's defense of the Antioch theory is very convincing, and has won considerable acceptance. A unanimous verdict can never be hoped for.

2. The problem relative to the readers is not in quite such a confused state. There are only two claimants for recognition at this point. What is known as the North Galatian theory assumes that the letter was written to churches established by Paul on the Second Journey (Ac. 16:6) and revisited by him on the Third Journey (Ac. 18:23). But an increasing number of scholars are coming to accept the view, known as the South Galatian theory, that those addressed were the churches at Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, established by Paul on his First Journey. Ramsay has placed beyond dispute the fact that these churches belong to the very territory covered by the Roman province of Galatia. Hence they could be most naturally addressed as "the churches of Galatia" (Gal. 1:2). The arguments for this view are so very convincing that it is quite likely to be the prevalent theory of future criticism. For a full and excellent presentation of both theories see Burton's *Commentary on Galatians* in the International Critical series.

#### I AND II CORINTHIANS.

Again we may accept as a settled matter the question of authorship. That Paul wrote these Epistles there is no reason for doubting. I Corinthians bears so many intimations of its origin and purpose that it may be

placed confidently outside the realm of critical problems. The only problem connected with 2 Corinthians is that of its unity.

The discordant phenomena of 2 Corinthians and its lack of logical progress—so unusual for Paul—were first observed as far back as Semler in 1767. Since his day an increasing number of scholars have sought to solve the problem by breaking the Epistle up into shorter letters, which are supposed to have been written by Paul at different times and under different circumstances, and later, for some unknown reason, compiled into a single document. The most important of these original letters is found in chapters 10:1 to 13:10, the harsh tone of which is so different from the conciliatory attitude expressed in the other portions of the Epistle. Other fragments are seen in chapters 8 and 9, and in 6:14-7:1—in fact, the chief objection to the theory is that the process of dissection, when once begun, has difficulty in finding an obvious limit. The idea is very attractive on the face of it, for it affords an explanation of the supposed “lost epistles” of Paul, referred to in 1 Cor. 5:9 and 2 Cor. 2:4, but when we confront the difficulty of final agreement on divisions and the effort to explain why such a compilation ever took place, then compare these theories with the very convincing arguments for unity, we grow wary of the partition hypothesis, and share in the admirable caution of Malden’s opinion that “it cannot be called more than a plausible theory” (*Problems of NT*, p. 69).

#### ROMANS.

This is the fourth of the “impregnable quartet” of Pauline Epistles, denied by none except a few capricious Dutch scholars, who incline us to place a ques-

tion mark after the word "scholar" when we ascribe it to them. This Epistle is the enduring monument to the great Apostle to the Gentiles. The only problem ever raised in connection with it has been relative to its conclusion. At several points in the last two chapters one arrives at what appears to be a fitting place to close, but the Epistle goes on. This phenomenon has led to the theory that fragments of other epistles have been attached to the end of Romans. Some would close the book at 15:13; others at 15:33. The latter theory has some degree of plausibility, for according to it chapter 16 is a short epistle designed for Ephesus, hence containing names of so many with whom Paul was intimately acquainted, some of whom we know resided in Ephesus. That Paul should know so many people in Rome, whither he had never been, seems very strange to some critics. But when we consider the known restlessness of the period, and the great disposition to travel, together with the fact that people were certain to go to Rome in considerable numbers from all the territory frequented by Paul, the weight of this argument vanishes. Cautious criticism continues to regard Romans as a unit.

#### THE IMPRISONMENT EPISTLES.

In the case of Philippians and Philemon we need pause for but bare mention. Their own circumstantial character and inimitable Pauline traits secure them against any possibility of successful challenge. The question of the chronological order of the four Imprisonment Epistles has evoked a great deal of discussion, but the matter is relatively unimportant, and in the

very nature of the case can never be settled. The critical problems of this group rest with Colossians and Ephesians.

Colossians is still rejected *in toto* by a few critics, though the great majority acknowledge that it has at least a Pauline substratum. To this admission they are forced by the relation of this Epistle to Philemon. Holtzmann was the first to elaborate the theory that Colossians was an expansion of a genuine Pauline epistle, wrought by the hand that produced Ephesians, and using the same material which furnished the contents of Ephesians. This theory is rendered plausible by the great deal which the two Epistles contain in common. But to accept Holtzmann's hypothesis we have to suppose, either that when the revised and enlarged edition was published the early Christians credulously laid aside and totally disregarded the original shorter edition, or that the redactor ferreted out a lost epistle of Paul to the Colossians, expanded it and gave it out to the public. The first theory is a psychological impossibility, while the latter, though possible, is too far-fetched to be very convincing. The theory is far more difficult than the difficulties which it seeks to remove. "The complexity of the hypothesis tells fatally against it" (Peake, *Intro.*, p. 52). The objectors to Colossians are at a hopeless disadvantage.

Objections to Ephesians seem to have begun with Schleiermacher, were perpetuated by Baur, Renan, DeWette, Holtzmann, and others, and have become very popular in the liberal circles of the present. But the real state of the problem may be discerned in the fact that Harnack, though acknowledging the plausibility of objections, fails to find the difficulties indicated sufficient for final rejection of the Epistle from the genuine

Pauline group, and Julicher concludes that while "Ephesians may not belong to our unquestioned Pauline heritage, it would yet be equally impossible to deny the Apostle's authorship with confidence" (*Intro.*, p. 147). The acceptance of Ephesians by these two great liberal scholars with confessions of doubt is indicative of the fact that their verdicts are necessitated by the strength of the evidence. But let us examine the objections in detail.

1. That the strong likeness which the Epistle bears to Colossians seems to indicate that it was merely an elaboration of that Epistle by some disciple or admirer of Paul. But the dependence is not always that of Ephesians on Colossians, but is sometimes evidently the reverse. This is the reason for Holtzmann's theory that the author of Ephesians wrote with a brief Colossian epistle from Paul's hand before him, and then expanded the original Colossians by material from Ephesians. This complicated hypothesis is in itself proof that the entire dependence of Ephesians upon Colossians for the common material cannot be maintained. In view of this mutual indebtedness of Colossians and Ephesians, undoubtedly "the simplest explanation" is "that *one* man—in this case Paul—had written the two related Epistles, at short intervals, but Ephesians probably a little later, and that certain thoughts and modes of expression which were still in his mind from the earlier Epistle had found their way plentifully into the later" (Julicher, *Intro.*, p. 146).

2. That the style of Ephesians is un-Pauline. This argument also destroys the genuineness of Colossians, for the style of the two is remarkably similar; in fact, there are no other two books in the NT any more alike.



But this is regarded as equally an objection to Colossians. But the difference of these two Epistles from the style of Paul's earlier writings may quite reasonably be accounted for by the differences in occasion and purpose and the natural modification in style which takes place in the experience of any developing individual.

3. That there is too great a difference in the theological emphasis between Ephesians and the known Epistles of Paul for the former to have come from his hand. In the undisputed Epistles of Paul the problems of salvation occupy chief attention; here the person of Christ holds first place. Does this mean that in the light of Paul's earlier Epistles we are to suppose that he had but a passing interest in the person of his Lord? or that he was incapable of discussing such delicate questions? Unless one of the two of these suppositions be contemplated the explanation of this shift in theological emphasis lies right out on the surface. There was a new occasion demanding the new emphasis: that is all. The situation which confronted Paul determined the character of his earlier Epistles. The different situation presented in the Imprisonment Epistles called for a different character.

4. That Ephesians contained a view of the nature of the church which is un-Pauline. This objection is based upon an interpretation of Paul's use of the term church in the light of later ecclesiastical developments. Such a method of interpretation is obviously false. We have here Paul's conception of the church as a local body idealized and used as a means of illustrating Christ's relationship to the believer. This is recognized as the plain historical interpretation when we step back

into Paul's antecedents and look from that side at his use of the term.

5. That the heresy combated bears the marks of second century Gnosticism. This objection simply cannot be sustained. The heresy reflected here bears every necessary evidence of being only an incipient form of second century Gnosticism. We will have more on this point later (and cf. above, p. 306).

From these unsuccessful objections let us turn to the positive evidence. The earliest traces of the Epistle are in 1 Peter. Those who accept the apostolic authorship of 1 Peter cut all the ground from under a denial of the Pauline authorship of Ephesians. The only real objections vanish by reason of the early date thus made necessary, and there is the improbability that Peter would be so much influenced by anyone of less calibre than Paul. We again find traces of Ephesians in 1 Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, and Hermas. It was included in Marcion's collection of Pauline Epistles, in the Muratorian canon, and was quoted as a genuine work of Paul from Irenæus on. Stronger traditional support could not be had.

Most convincing of all are the incidental Pauline traits exhibited by the Epistle. We find the familiar Pauline structure: a doctrinal section, followed by a practical section, and introduced by a thanksgiving. However, the thanksgiving is blended into the opening verses of the doctrinal section, a thing impossible to conceive of as the work of a forger. An imitator would have taken great pains to get the thanksgiving in the normal Pauline position, as did the author of Laodiceans (1:3). The use of *adoption* in 1:5 (cf. Rom. 8:15); basing of the processes of grace upon the Resurrection in 1:20; the unstrained similarity of ideas in

2:18 and Rm. 5:1; the characteristic Pauline *anacolutha* in 2:11; 3:1, 8; the emphatic sense of a special mission to the Gentiles in 3:1ff; and many other instances, present Pauline characteristics which appeal to one as placing the Epistle above the range of controversy. With the greatest possible assurance we may abide in the confidence that the Apostle Paul wrote both Colossians and Ephesians, and that they belong in the same group with Philippians and Philemon.

#### THE PASTORAL EPISTLES.

The brunt of the attack on the Pauline literature has been delivered against the Pastoral Epistles. And this is for the simple reason that they present the weakest point in Pauline criticism. Nothing is to be gained by evading the problem; it is altogether best to face it frankly, and work for the sanest and most reasonable solution. These three Epistles are different in style, language, and general character of the ideas expressed from the other Epistles of Paul. There are 171 words in them not found elsewhere in Paul's writings. This, however, is not a strange phenomenon when we consider the entirely new issues with which he is dealing. The real problem lies in the new material. The author of these Epistles is not dealing with the familiar Pauline themes, but launches forth into extended discussions of ecclesiastical questions. But we may pause to ask, what constitutes a theme as characteristically Pauline? It is the fact that it is given a prominent place in some—not necessarily all—of Paul's writings. We are therefore unable to pronounce the ideas of the Pastoral Epistles "un-Pauline" until we have proven by other considerations that the Epistles were not written by Paul. The different ideas then may be Paul's after all, and they take

care of the different language. Then there remains the variance in style. This difficulty has been greatly exaggerated by opposing critics, and what difference there is may be accounted for by the difference in theme and situation, and a normal modification in style. The style of these Epistles departs about as far from Ephesians and Colossians as these do from the Thessalonians. Hence the most serious difficulty, that of style, diction, and character, finds a plain and reasonable explanation.

But it is objected that the type of church life reflected in the Pastoral Epistles is too late for Paul. How do we know? It is approximately the same as that reflected in I Clement, and hence is characteristic church government of the first century. We have seen above (p. 295f) that it marks a normal stage in the development of church organization.

Once more the late heresy is advanced. This objection is based upon an unhistorical procedure. The only way we can determine the progress of a heresy is by discovering the date of the writings which reflect it. The reverse method is absurd. Heresies do not advance on prescribed schedule like modern locomotives. There is no fixed rate at which they develop, hence heresy can never become a criterion for chronology.

Finally, we are told that there is no place in Acts for the Pastoral Epistles. Indeed, there is not, but Acts closes with Paul still alive. The Pastoral Epistles form part of the very convincing evidence that Paul was released, was at liberty for a considerable period, and finally executed as the culmination of a second imprisonment.

The objections are by no means fatal; what positive reasons have we for accepting these Epistles as Pauline? There is first the testimony of tradition. They

are reflected in I Clement, Ignatius and Polycarp. Indeed, there is in Polycarp an approximate quotation of 1 Tim. 6:7, 10 (cf. Polycarp, *Phils.* 4). It is true that they were omitted from Marcion's canon, but his grounds of rejection were undoubtedly doctrinal instead of critical. After the middle of the second century these Epistles are freely quoted as Paul's. "So far, then, as the early Church can guarantee to us the authenticity of writings ascribed to Paul, the Pastoral Epistles are guaranteed" (Dods, *Intro.*, p. 168).

The bulwark of the Pastorals is 2 Timothy. So much of the merely occasional is found in this Epistle that most critics have found it impossible to reject it all. It is not possible to conceive of a forger writing such passages as 2 Tim. 1:3-18 and 4:6-22. *Yet these passages determine the spirit of the whole Epistle and are inseparable from the rest.* It does violence to sane methods of literary criticism to attempt to dissect 2 Timothy. And if Paul wrote 2 Timothy there is no reason to doubt that he wrote the other two. Therefore the balance of evidence is still entirely in favor of the Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles.





## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE RELIGION OF PAUL.

Prof. J. Gresham Machen, in his able work on *The Origin of Paul's Religion* (p. 21), has succinctly characterized the Apostle to the Gentiles in one pregnant sentence: "In dealing with the Apostle Paul we are dealing with one of the moving factors of the world's history." No other man save Jesus of Nazareth has more profoundly influenced the experience of the human race. The debt which Christianity owes to him can never be calculated. With the single exception of James, he is the earliest witness of the religion of Christ whose testimony is still extant. Six of his epistles antedate the Synoptic Gospels, and those are the very six about which criticism has raised the least question. Hence, the first voice of history which speaks to us in any definite way about Jesus is that of Paul.

But in the hands of a group of modern critics Paul has been required to submit to a philosophical theory of early Christian history which seriously impairs the validity of his testimony. The movement was initiated by Baur and the Tuebingen school, and, while many of the details of their conclusions have been rejected under pressure of scientific investigation, many critics are still enamored of their attitude and method, as may be seen when one of them, just a little apologetically, names "Ferdinand Christian Baur as the founder of 'constructive' criticism" (Bacon, *Jesus and Paul*, p. 20). This "critical" method of interpreting Paul has

produced two theories, determined by two variant angles of approach.

(1) The first comes from those who are most concerned with the Jewish basis of the Christian religion. They see in Paul a true child of Judaism, though with a liberal attitude toward the Gentile world resulting from the Hellenistic contacts of his early life in Tarsus. This theory views Paul's original experience and conceptions of Jesus as derived from the primitive disciples, but progressively modified by the effects of his previous training and the exigencies of his apostolic labors. Hence, Paul's definition of Christianity was determined chiefly by rabbinic Judaism, but adapted at many points to the Hellenistic world in which he moved.

(2) The second "critical" theory approaches Paul from the angle of his Græco-Roman environment. It admits that the original basis of Paul's religion lay in Judaism, but regards it as clothed and elaborated with materials derived from Hellenistic philosophy and pagan religious cults which appeared as his rivals in missionary propaganda. He had experienced a psychological upheaval, called his "conversion," wherein his attitude and point of view were revolutionized, and in consequence of which he seized upon the name of Jesus of Nazareth as a pivotal point for his new system of religious conceptions, and first enshrined him in the Messianism of his own people as his "Christ," but, as a result of his later associations with the pagan Gentile world, added to his Christ-idea those of Savior and Lord. It is perfectly clear that according to this theory Paul's "Christ" had no essential connection with the historical Jesus, further than the impression made upon his original disciples and transmitted through them to

Paul that he was the expected Messiah of Israel. Some critics of this school make this a very important factor in the development of Paul's religion, but others utterly lose sight of the primitive Christian Messiah in pressing the theory as far as possible toward the pagan savior-god conception. Practically all the literature of the NT is understood as a product of this Pauline amalgamation, representing to a greater or less degree this Pauline "Christ" rather than the historical Jesus. This would mean that Paul swept the whole of primitive Christianity away from any recognition of the authentic historical facts of its origin, a supposition which is preposterous on the face of it. The absurd extremes to which this method of treating Paul's life will lead may be found in this statement, "The truth is . . . that there was no 'Christ' and there were no 'Christians' during the lifetime of Jesus, and his Messiahship was not thought of until *many years after the death of Jesus* it occurred to the fertile brain of one Saul or Paul, a tentmaker from Tarsus, that 'this Jesus whom the Jews have crucified' was the promised Messiah" (Singer, *Rival Philosophies of Jesus and Paul*, p. 71). Of course no sane critic would subscribe to this statement, but it represents the ultimate fruition of the method. If we are going to construct theories and by them reconstruct history, warping the data as the process may require, there is no limit upon the fancy of the theorist save reason, and when that faculty is lacking we may expect such views as the one just quoted.

Both of these theories agree at one point; namely, that *doctrinal* Christianity originated with Paul—in fact, that Paul is to be regarded as the original founder of "Christianity" as evangelical orthodoxy views it,

while the religion of Jesus is to be defined as an *ethical* Christianity, according to some, or an *apocalyptic* Christianity, in the view of another school.

As we consider the religion of Paul, two matters appear for investigation. The first is the problem of his experience, just what the actual phenomena were and how they are to be accounted for. The second is his teaching. It is not the province of criticism to concern itself with the contents of his teaching, but to discover the sources or factors which are in evidence.

#### I. PAUL'S EXPERIENCE.

Every critic who has any regard for reason acknowledges the experience of Paul as being one of the marvels of history. The remarkable powers of mind and spirit which are manifest; the depth and sincerity of his fiery zeal, characterizing both his opposition and devotion to Christianity; the climacteric revolution which brought the complete reversal of his entire career; the unparalleled fortitude with which he applied himself to his task; and the powerful influence which he exerted over his own and all subsequent ages; these and many other astounding features of his life make Paul one of the sublime spectacles of history. Two great facts lie at the basis of this experience; his conversion, and his sense of a divinely ordained apostolic mission.

##### 1. *Conversion.*

Our interpretation of Paul's conversion depends largely on what we regard it as comprehending. To some it means only the particular experience on the road to Damascus as described in Acts 9:1-9. But this is hardly an adequate view of the matter. It is true that in one sense this experience alone constituted his con-

version, for it marked the definite point of change in his career, the climax of God's revelation of His Son in him, but there is not sufficient evidence for regarding the Damascus experience as standing out independent and isolated from the rest of his life, either prior or subsequent. It is inseparably bound with what came before and what came after. If it be objected that this is a compromise with the naturalistic view of the matter, our reply is that there is no merely naturalistic view which has ever successfully explained Paul's conversion, hence we need not be suspicious of some feature of the theory which does approach the truth. Paul himself refers the operation of the divine purpose in his life back to his birth (Gal. 1:15), and it is hardly to be supposed that God had no contact with his life from his birth to his conversion. In fact, none would deny the general movements of divine providence which were preparing him for his great career, and it is hardly possible to deny that there were some of these lines of providence which led up to his conversion. Therefore, of Paul's conversion there are three phases to be considered, the antecedents, the crisis, and the issue.

(1) *The Antecedents.* One fact makes it quite plausible to deny that there were any prior agencies preparing the way for the conversion of Paul, such as is true of all ordinary conversions. This fact is the tangible appearance of Jesus. But while it is correct to maintain that this opens the possibility of a conversion independent of previous influences, it does not make such preparatory agencies impossible. When we examine the records we find that such antecedents are intimated. There is nothing in the account in Galatians (1:13-17) which ob-



viates such an explanation. Rather the impression is left that Paul thought of the purpose of God as imminent in his experience right up to the great crisis. We must bear in mind that Paul does not, in this passage, indicate just what part of the process described he regards as being his conversion. Hence we must be cautious about pressing a definition on the basis of this passage. It seems certain that in Rom. 7:7-25 Paul indicates a sense of deficiency in his religious consciousness before conversion. It is not justifiable to regard this sense as a clear realization of failure, for such Paul had not until from his Christian experience he looked back upon his life as a Pharisee, but there was a consciousness of great difficulty in attaining the desired goal. This could not but have engendered a spirit of restless uneasiness. That this attitude of mind had no part in his conversion is hardly to be assumed.

The account in Acts 26:12ff. contains a passage of much mooted significance. "It is hard for thee to kick against the goad." It is difficult to see what significance there could have been to the "goad" if Paul was unconscious of it. Granted the goad was the irresistible will of God in his life, the illustration appears rather awkward if Paul knew nothing of it. But if there was in Paul a growing sense of the insufficiency of his Pharisaic religion the illustration of the goad becomes quite fitting. And it is hard to conceive of Paul being entirely impervious to the fortitude and sublime faith of the apostolic witness to the gospel. Could a soul sufficiently sensitive to have experienced the ferocious zeal of the persecution described in Acts 8:3, at the same time have been indifferent to the angelic face of the dying Stephen? We regard it as necessary to recognize



at least two antecedents to the conversion of Paul: his vain effort to attain the standards of Pharisaism, and the witness of the primitive disciples.

(2) *The Crisis*. Here we arrive at the crux of the whole matter. That there was a crisis no one denies. There was a violent upheaval—call it psychic, spiritual, or by whatever adjective you choose—in Paul's experience which changed the whole course of his life in a moment. Whether there were antecedents or not, no question remains that there was a crisis.

How may we account for this crisis? There has been the neurological hypothesis. This theory explains that Paul was of a very nervous temperament, being afflicted with some chronic malady which caused a physical depletion. Because of this, he was subject to swooning or epilepsy. As he neared Damascus the fatigue of the journey and the intense heat of the desert road brought on one of his "spells," which he superstitiously attributed to his errand of persecution, decided that Jesus had stricken him down, and changed his attitude and course of action. This explanation is so absurd on the face of it that it needs no refutation. Not only does it fail to account for the facts; it ignores most of the facts.

Then there is the psychological hypothesis. This places great stress on the antecedents of the conversion. Paul's desperate dissatisfaction with his Pharisaic righteousness, his reflection upon the better elements in Judaism, and the disturbance created in his heart by the bravery and devotion of the Christian martyrs whom he persecuted, these and other causes bore upon his mind until it reached the breaking point. The break came on the road to Damascus. Being of an excitable temperament, he had a vision, a hallucination, and thought

that the risen Jesus appeared to him. Certain impulses seized upon his mind, which he afterward described as a voice speaking to him. By virtue of this experience the haughty Pharisee became the humble captive of Calvary's cross. One realizes a very definite sense of insufficiency as he applies this theory to Paul's conversion. In fact, its advocates themselves are unable to agree on the details of the theory. They show that they are not fully satisfied with their own explanation.

There are certain phenomena of this experience which a hypothesis must explain before it can be accepted. Quite clearly it changed the whole tenor of Paul's being. He had been a frenzied Pharisee, governed by religious prejudice, the most unreasoning passion which has ever influenced the human will. He became a gentle and sympathetic minister to human need. Before conversion, "breathing threatening and slaughter," he "laid waste the church, entering into every house, and dragging men and women, committed them to prison" (Ac. 9:1; 8:3). After conversion, "we were gentle in the midst of you, as when a nurse cherisheth her own children: even so, being affectionately desirous of you, we were well pleased to impart unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were become very dear to us" (1 Thes. 1:7, 8). The comparison of these statements, which practically all regard as representing authentic facts, leaves no room to doubt that Paul's conversion was a complete transformation.

A second essential phenomenon of the experience: it convinced Paul of the Resurrection, which conviction became the basis of his faith and doctrine, and the motive of his sacrifice. In the light of Paul's subsequent life it simply cannot be doubted that he believed abso-

lutely in the objective reality of his conversion experience. The presence of this conviction in a strong, cultured intellect, is exceedingly significant. It is difficult to think of Paul as becoming the victim of a spectral delusion.

A third fact of importance was Paul's failure to recognize Jesus when he appeared. This is the fact before which the theory of hallucination crumbles. Apparitions cannot present material which has been previously unknown to the subject. The content of a subjective vision must exist already in the mind. It is inconceivable to think of a person experiencing an hallucination and enquiring of the apparition who it is, and receiving from the apparition an intelligible reply. The alternatives before the critic are to reject the three accounts of Paul's conversion in Acts with the corroborative intimations in his Epistles, or acknowledge that on the road to Damascus Paul met a literal person, and that person was Jesus of Nazareth.

As Prof. Machen has conclusively shown (*Origin of Paul's Religion*, pp. 67f.), it is just this fact of Jesus literally accosting Paul in person which furnishes the only sufficient explanation of his conversion. Unlimited possibilities are involved in the impact of personalities. One's entire conception of a person may be changed by actually meeting him. How was Paul changed from the jealous enemy to the zealous friend and slave of Jesus? It was the result of personal contact. The best hypothesis yet offered for that marvelous experience on the Damascus road is that Paul literally came face to face with the risen Christ. All other theories fail to satisfactorily account for the three facts which we have indicated.

(3) *The Issue.* The determinative factor in all Paul's experience and teaching was his conversion. He submitted to the will of Christ and served him faithfully to the point of martyrdom because he believed he had seen his Lord alive from the dead. This Resurrection conviction was the foundation of all his theology. His conception of salvation as an unmerited gift of God was molded largely by the fact that he was apprehended in the midst of his Pharisaic self-righteousness and rebellion and called into the privileges and service of the gospel. Some modern critics think that Paul got his idea of redemption from his pagan environment. Paul thought he got it from his own experience in Christ (Gal. 2:15-20). We may take our choice as to whose verdict we will accept.

## 2. *The Sense of Apostleship.*

This is the second most prominent and effective factor in Paul's experience. In fact, he refers to it more frequently than he does to his conversion. Paul believed that one great purpose had dominated his life from birth. This was God's will to make him "a light of the Gentiles" (Ac. 13:47). This mission carried with it the authority and responsibility of formulating the gospel message. This gospel Paul believed himself to be receiving from Christ. To challenge it was to rebel against the authority of the Master. The most prominent single fact in Paul's life was his defense of the truth as he believed himself to have received it from Christ. To Paul the revelation of the gospel in his soul was of divine origin; whatever he accepted from his environment was but the incidental vehicle of expression. Much of the modern "historical" investigation of Paul's religion puts all faith in its own critical

theories and ignores the contents of the Apostle's consciousness. To Paul the significant thing in his career was his mission as an apostle, received from God through Christ, in view of which he performed his arduous missionary labors, and on the basis of which he constructed his gospel.

## II. PAUL'S TEACHING.

We now address ourselves directly to the question of Paul's interpretation of Jesus. This task can not be adequately performed, however, without keeping before us the evidences from his experience. We have seen how the radical factor in his career as a Christian was his conversion. Growing out of this was his sense of a divine apostolic mission, in the light of which he constructed his gospel. Another prerequisite to our understanding of his teaching is a consideration of the outline of his life. He was brought up in Tarsus (Ac. 21:39), in an intensely Jewish home (Phils. 3:5), his father having in all probability been a Pharisee (Ac. 23:6) as well as a Roman citizen (Ac. 22:29). He was educated in the rabbinic schools of Jerusalem (Ac. 22:3), and was a diligent student (Gal. 1:13) and devoted adherent of standard Judaism (Phils. 3:5). After his conversion and baptism, he repaired to Arabia (Gal. 1:17) where he spent some time in solitude and meditation. There can be no doubt that much of Paul's theology became fixed at this period, and observe that our authority for this Arabian sojourn is one of the four cardinal Epistles. After this he returned to Damascus (Gal. 1:17) and joined his Jewish-Christian brethren in their assemblies (Ac. 9:20ff) and devoted himself to interpreting the Messiahship of Jesus in the light of the Jewish scriptures. Driven out of Damascus, he



returned to Jerusalem for a season (Ac. 9:23-26; Gal. 1:18), where he was again in contact with Jewish Christians. From Jerusalem he returned to Tarsus (Ac. 9:30; Gal. 1:21). Just how he was engaged while in his home city we do not know, but that he was in close contact with Judaism is practically certain. At least five years must be allowed to this period of Paul's history. A year was then spent with Barnabas, a great Jerusalem leader, in missionary labors in Antioch (Ac. 11:26), followed by a visit of unknown duration to Jerusalem (Ac. 11:30). Then came his organized evangelization of the Gentile world. So it may be seen that the first decade or more, the formative period, of Paul's Christian career was spent in close contact with Jewish Christianity. Therefore the fundamental features of his religion must have been fixed before the period of his more extensive Gentile contact. In the light of these facts we may proceed to our investigation of the relations which influenced his thought and experience.

### 1. *Relation to Judaism.*

Paul was reared in a loyal Jewish home, and trained in the rabbinic schools of Jerusalem. The elements thus planted in his life would inevitably influence his religious thought and experience. We could not suppose that his conversion, as revolutionary as it was, obliterated all previous factors in his life. Unstinted devotion to the will of God as he understood it characterized him before his conversion as well as after. The uncompromising monotheism of his Judaic training continued with him. His rabbinic training undoubtedly gave form to some of his definitions of Christian truth. His view of sin as rebellion against God and as native to



human nature finds parallels in rabbinic theology. The thought of divine forgiveness was not a novel idea to him, though the method was wholly different from the Judaic conception. Reconciliation was a familiar doctrine in rabbinic Judaism, though not connected in any way with the Messiah. Repentance as a condition of favor with God was understood, but this again was unrelated to Messianic conceptions. While Paul sat at the feet of Gamaliel, divine providence was creating in his mind a deposit of religious knowledge which would provide a framework for the revelation and expression of the gospel of redemption.

## 2. *Relation to Hellenism.*

That Paul was greatly indebted to the Greek culture of his day is a fact too obvious to admit of controversy. Those to whom he devoted the greater part of his apostolic ministry were people of Greek education and customs. He preached and wrote exclusively in the Greek language, which meant that he used Greek terms and thought forms. However, we must not forget that Paul, according to his own testimony, was very cautious and reserved in his policy of adaptation. While the general principle of his service was to "become all things to all men" (1 Cor. 9:22), which certainly leads us to suppose that to the Greek he became a Greek, yet he "came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom" (1 Co. 2:1) in proclaiming the testimony of God, but made the crucified Christ the controlling center of his message. That is, he decided the mode of presentation in view of the audience (cf. Ac. 17:22ff.), *but allowed no consideration of adaptation to alter the theme.* Such was Paul's policy, if we accept his own

testimony and do not require that he conform to a certain "historical" method of criticism.

This carries us to the heart of the chief question before us here. Was Paul's religion fundamentally affected by his Hellenistic environment? Or to be quite specific, how much did Paul derive from the mystery-religions of the Græco-Roman world? It is held by a school of critics who took the field in the last half of the past century that the essential content of Paul's religion was compiled from the mystery cults.

The theory that Paul obtained his religious conceptions from the mysteries has in it two fatal errors. (1) It disregards that large portion of Paul's theology which, on the one hand, came from the primitive Jewish Christians, and on the other, had its historical basis in rabbinic theology and was stated in the terms of rabbinic theology. (2) It makes Paul the chief basis for reconstructing the mystery-religions, reading into them from Pauline Christianity many ideas which they did not contain, and describing them with Christian terminology. It builds a very elaborate theory on a very few data. "We know far less about the actual rites and doctrines of the Mystery-Religions in the Græco-Roman world than we do of their wide diffusion and potent influence. This is not surprising, for on the one hand their votaries were strictly enjoined to keep silent on their most sacred experiences, and, on the other, stern critics of paganism like the early Christian Fathers must inevitably have been biased in their casual representations of the facts. The literary remains of these communities are very scanty. Some mystic formulæ, a few hymns and prayers, some narratives of initiations and allied ceremonial practically exhaust the list. To supplement them there are vague allusions and isolated

fragments of information which may be pieced together from Hellenistic and early Christian writers" (Kennedy, *St. Paul and the Mystery-Religions*, p. 68). But the very paucity of the data offers an advantage to the critic. He can construct a very plausible theory on the universally recognized principle of development, base upon it the conclusion that Paul inevitably was affected by his religious environment, and then read into the mystery religions considerable of what Paul believed. A method involving so large a degree of assumption can hardly hope for serious attention from unbiased historical science.

It is assumed that Paul was influenced by the mystery-religions at two points, his view of the Christian ordinances and his view of redemption.

(1) *The Ordinances*. Influence of the mysteries upon the Lord's Supper is quite clearly reflected in one place in Paul's writings. This is in 1 Co. 11:17-34. The sacred meals of the mystery cults were feasts and not ceremonies, so when the Corinthian Christians observed the Lord's Supper they were influenced by their former pagan practices to turn the sacred occasion into a festival of revelry and gluttony. Such abuse of the ordinance Paul unequivocally condemns. Thus the influence of the mysteries on the Lord's Supper was entirely negative. No positive influence appears until after the Apostolic Age (cf. Hatch, *Greek Influence on the Christian Church*, pp. 300ff.). The mysteries also exerted a positive influence upon the ordinance of baptism, *but this influence does not appear until after the middle of the second century*. Exactly the alterations which were effected are known (cf. Hatch, *op. cit.*, pp. 294ff.).

(2) *The Idea of Redemption.* The mystery cults belong to a class of religions known as redemption-religions. That is, they conceived of relief coming to man from external agencies. These external agencies were the gods which they worshipped. Redemption-religions placed emphasis on the salvation of the individual rather than the nation. The salvation was attained by participation in the life of the god or goddess, accomplished through certain rites of initiation and communion.

It is clear that a very plausible theory may be advanced for intimate connections between Pauline Christianity and these religions. For an adequate and concise explanation of the matter we can not do better than quote at length from Albert Schweitzer.

“The attempt to prove that Christianity is derived from these mystery-religions of redemption does not lead to positive results. Christianity is much richer than they, for it comprises elements of a very different type. However much one may idealize the Græco-Oriental mystery-religions—and some of the investigators have idealized them beyond measure—they are still poverty-stricken, compared with Christianity. If one forms an unbiased judgment, on the basis of the extant records concerning them, a great deal of charm with which they are being surrounded today vanishes. They are concerned solely with the bestowal of immortality upon men through magic. The ethical element, which plays such a predominant part in Christianity, they contain in words, at best, but not in reality. . . .

“A fundamental difference between the redemption-idea found in the cults of the Hellenistic period and that of Christianity lies in this: the one knows nothing

of the conception of the Kingdom of God, whereas the other is dominated by that conception..

“Hellenistic religion is exclusively concerned with the destiny of spirit in the world of matter. It seeks to understand how the life from above came down into the lower life, and how it can be released from this captivity. Its interest centers in this restoration of the spiritual element to its original sphere, and not in the fate of mankind or of the world. Christianity, on the other hand, lives by the glowing hope of a better world. Redemption, according to the Christian conception, is the action of God, who brings this better world, the Kingdom of God, into existence and receives into it those men who have proved themselves to be of an honest and good heart. . . .

“From every point of view, therefore, the contention that Christianity can be explained by being traced back to Græco-Oriental religious thought has to be regarded as phantasy introduced into the sphere of the comparative study of religions. Christianity is the creation of Jesus, whose spiritual background was late-Jewish piety” (*Christianity and the Religions of the World*, pp. 24-27).

These words, coming as they do from a liberal critic of Germany, are profoundly significant for the conservative interpretation of the origin of the Christian religion. They mean that we have the actual *facts* on our side. The similarities between Paul and the redemption views of the mystery cults were coincidents arising from the common religious instincts of the race; the essentials of Paul's religion had no relation whatever to his environment.

But let us avoid the error of the opposite extreme in assuming that Christianity passed into a world so



widely influenced by these religions and yet experienced no effects of any kind from the contact. These cults had produced in the world of that day a religious vocabulary which was widespread and very expressive. The most effective point of contact with religious thought was through this language. It would therefore be very strange if some of the terms which coincided with Christian ideas should not occur in the NT, and especially in Paul's literature. The fact is, we find such to be the case. "Paul is never greater than in his power to take the very language of the various cults of the time and charge it with Christian meaning" (A. T. Robertson, *Paul the Interpreter of Christ*, p. 27). In this we simply have another instance of how God was providing in the first century world the instrumentalities which might be effectively used in laying the foundations of truth for the world's redemption.

### 3. *Relation to Jesus.*

This is the vital part of our discussion. We have practically solved the problem before us here by a process of elimination. Paul did not get the essentials of his religion from Judaism; he did not get them from Hellenism; therefore, the only possible source left is Jesus. It remains for us to confirm and demonstrate this conclusion.

(1) *Paul's Historical Relation to Jesus.* He was brought to recognize Jesus as the Messiah on the Damascus road, but there can be no question that he previously had extensive knowledge of the facts of his life. That Paul ever saw Jesus in person is very doubtful, but he certainly had ample opportunity of learning much about him, even in the pre-conversion period of



his life. That he was in frequent contact with Jerusalem there is no reason for doubting, and it is hardly possible that he could have been in the city during the last months of Christ's earthly ministry without hearing much about him. But however that may be, it is certain that after conversion he could not have avoided learning much of the historical facts of Jesus' earthly life. His contact with Peter and James during fifteen days of sojourn in Jerusalem (Gal. 1:18, 19), and intimate association with Barnabas and Mark on the First Missionary Journey made it simply impossible that he should not have learned much about the historical career of his Lord. But the final and conclusive proof of Paul's knowledge of the historical Jesus lies in the fact that the early Christian tradition prevailed in the very territory wherein he labored. It would therefore seem likely that Paul encouraged the propagation of the evangelic tradition, but at any rate it is certain that he came into constant contact with it. It is therefore impossible that he could have avoided acquaintance with the historical life of his Master.

Bacon appropriately observes that "The supreme problem in the history of our religion is how it could change so profoundly in the brief space that can be allowed between the preaching of the gospel of the Kingdom by Jesus in Galilee, and the Gospel that Paul referred to in First Corinthians as received by him in the beginning, the redemption faith he expressly says was common to all disciples" (*Jesus and Paul*, pp. 33f.). The profound change really lies in the interpretation imposed upon the NT by liberal criticism, and not in the developments of early Christian history. *What Paul knew about Jesus as a historical person he received from the primitive disciples.* We are asked to strain

our credulity to the breaking point when the demand is made that we suppose Paul to have taken the original reminiscences and beliefs of the primitive apostolic group and transformed them into a radically different message, a new theory of redemption of his own making, and succeeded in carrying all of apostolic Christianity with him in his drastic alterations. Such an effort at reconstructing apostolic history need never hope to carry sober and unprejudiced minds with it.

(2) *Paul's Teaching Compared With That of Jesus.*

A monograph might well be written on this point, but here we have space for but a few suggestions. The most striking parallel is in the view of the kingdom of God. Hellenism had no such conception, and Judaism viewed the matter in a nationalistic, if not a political, light. Jesus viewed the Kingdom as primarily spiritual, as also did Paul (cf. Rm. 14:17). Paul's view of God can find no source save the teaching of Jesus on divine Fatherhood. He was far in advance of Judaism on the matter, can hardly be compared with Hellenism, and finds his only parallel in Jesus. Both manifested a revolutionary reaction against extreme legalism. Paul was in exact agreement with Jesus on eschatology. The only source from which he could have obtained his belief in the Second Advent was from the predictions of Jesus. These parallels are enough to indicate that Paul's teaching was by no means wholly foreign to that of Jesus.

(3) *Paul's View of Jesus.* Here is where Paul has got himself into trouble with modern criticism. His transcendent conception of Jesus as a divine Lord and Redeemer is utterly incompatible with the disposition of humanistic philosophy as represented in modern lib-

eral circles. The fact that Paul referred to Jesus as Lord is exceedingly significant. This term was the word used in the Septuagint as a translation of the Hebrew for "Jehovah." To the mind of a Jew it could not but carry a significance of deity. In Phils. 2:5-11 he ascribes both pre-existence and deity to the Savior. In Rom. 9:5 and Tit. 2:13 he calls Jesus God. The effort to prove that Paul did not believe Jesus to be essentially divine and the unique Son of God has been unavailing, wherefore liberal critics of more recent years have turned to the other recourse of contending that Paul has really misrepresented Jesus.

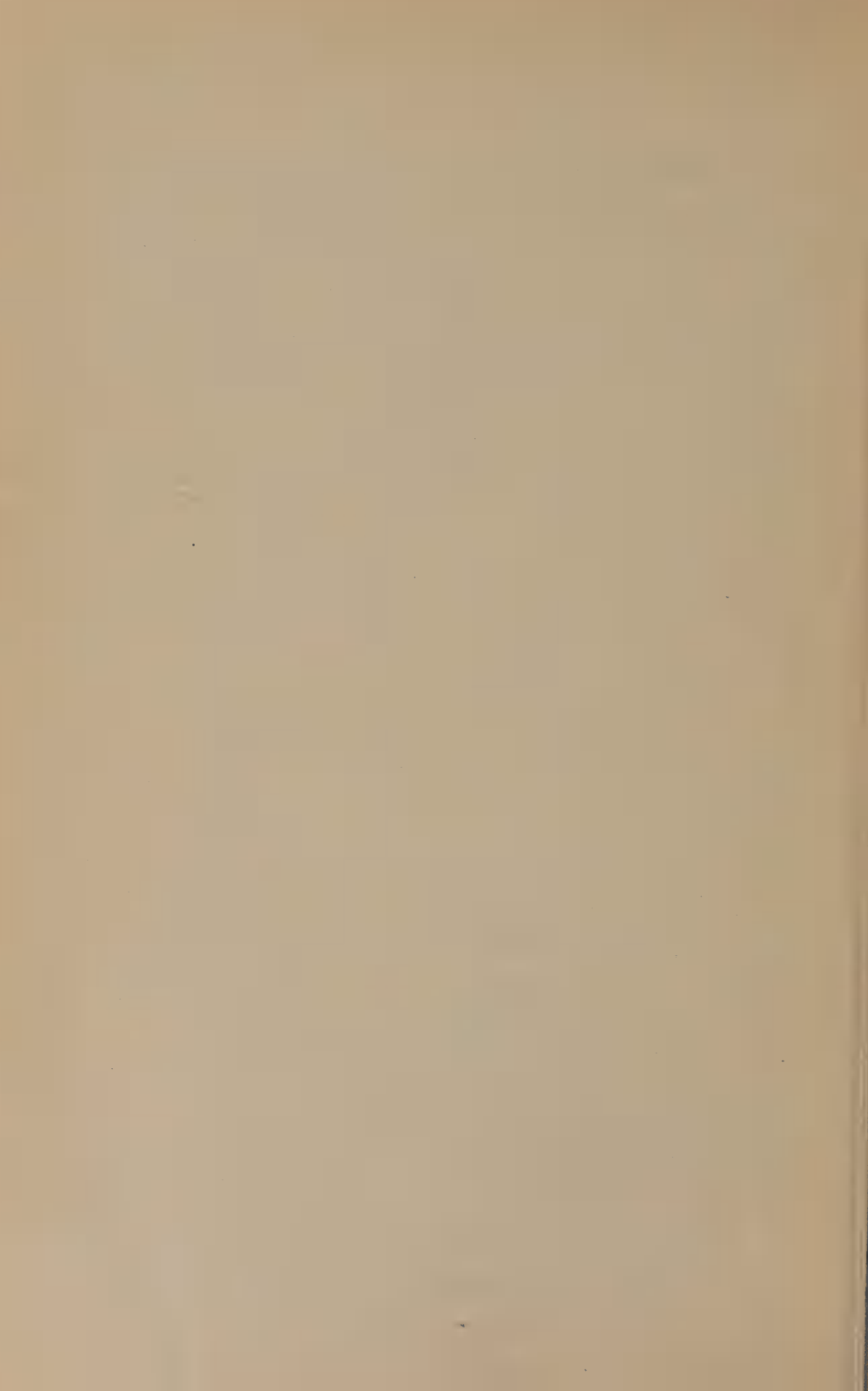
Yet when we consider the qualities ascribed to Jesus even by the most liberal criticism we feel that Paul has left us the only adequate explanation of the Master. He nowhere ascribes to his Lord a greater transcendence than the critic who lauds him as "a sage about whose historicity there can be no doubt; whose philosophy will stand the severest scrutiny of modern science; and whose postulates . . . are the only possible foundation for a sound philosophy" (Singer, *Rival Philosophies of Paul and Jesus*, p. 30). The best hypothesis upon which to explain such an exalted view of Jesus is the interpretation left us by Paul.

There has not loomed against the horizon of history a character more sublime than Paul—save Jesus himself. However much a certain type of criticism may object to his theology, it has imbedded itself so deeply in the religious life and thought of the world that no power will ever be able to eradicate it. To the end of time he will not cease to sway the souls of men with the convincing power of his logic and the fervor of his devotion to Christ. He must ever remain the one supreme, unrivaled Christian. But as we stand in grateful

adoration before the radiant charm of Paul we realize that he himself is not the original spiritual luminary. He shines with a borrowed light, the glory of his Master. The reviving message of redemptive hope which he has heralded across the ages bears as its tenderest notes of sympathy the echoes of another Voice, that Voice which stilled the raging sea, which called the Samaritan woman out of her sin and desolation, which spoke peace to the troubled heart of Nicodemus, which broke the stillness of Lazarus' tomb and proclaimed eternal triumph over death, the Voice of Jesus, the Light of life, the Essence of love, the final and sufficient Revelation of God to a lost and ruined world. To Him be the glory for ever and ever! Amen.

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